





County commissioners eagerly anticipate working with Sheriff-elect Dee Anderson

Welcome change

BY KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

For the past few months a tiny digital clock/calendar has sat in front of County Judge Tom Vandergriff during Tarrant County Commissioners' weekly meetings.

Vandergriff occasionally announces the number of days, hours and minutes before Sheriff David Williams leaves his post, comments that typically elicit laughter.

But even before these tongue-in-cheek updates, commissioners were

looking forward to Williams surrendering his office.

Since Williams lost his re-election bid in the March GOP primary, the countdown has materialized in decisions the court has delayed, requests it has denied, or actions it has taken — all with the new sheriff in mind.

It restricted Williams' budget, blocked a long-term jail contract, and denied training to high-ranking sheriff's employees who may be gone or demoted in January.

(More on SHERIFF on Page 8B)

And much of that happened before commissioners even knew who the new sheriff would be.

So now, as Arlington police spokesman Dee Anderson, the Republican sheriff-elect, prepares to step into his new role, he finds himself with a list of unfinished business — along with a buffer constructed by a court that appears determined to protect his interests when he takes office Jan. 1.

"I am grateful and flattered that they have chosen to put trust in me, and I'm going to try to repay that with doing as good a job as we can," Anderson said.

He said he had previously asked the four Republicans on the court — Commissioner Dionne Bagsby is the lone Democrat — to hold off on actions when possible.

"I think everything they can do between now and Jan. 1 just to hold on is the best approach," he said. "And that's the approach they've taken for several months now."

Many Republican county officials expressed confidence that Anderson would beat Democrat Luther Perry in the general election after Anderson won 54 percent of the vote over six other candidates in the GOP primary.

Bagsby said she hopes Anderson wasn't the driving force behind the court's decision-making before the election.

Even so, for other reasons, she still supported the court's attitude of keeping the new sheriff in mind in recent months.

"County government is not hierarchical," she said. "It only works if there is participation and collaboration."

Last week, commissioners put off consideration of civil-service promotional exams for sheriff's employees until Anderson could be part of the conversation.

Bagsby said she hopes that any testing would be administered by an objective party — possibly an outside county agency or official.

"But I don't see how it's possible if we cut out the new sheriff," she said. "You must have the department head — which is often another elected official — involved in those decisions. Otherwise, it's a waste of time, energy, resources."

The county filed suit last summer to stop a one-year contract Williams signed with Aramark Corp. Correctional Services to run the jail commissary and partially benefiting Faith Restorative Justice Chaplaincy — the jail ministry run by a friend of

Williams'.

Commissioners called the contract a "transparent sham" to help out Williams' friend. That suit is still in the courts.

"I don't think [Williams] ought to tie the other sheriff's hands for even one day," Commissioner J.D. Johnson said.

Some commissioners also expressed concern about leasing the long-abandoned Cold Springs Jail facility to a private company for housing state prisoners.

The court is expected to give final approval Tuesday, but they'll do it without the support of two commissioners — Bagsby and Marti VanRavenswaay — who objected to it when they voted in August to lease it out.

Neither supported leasing Cold Springs, they said, and were hoping the sheriff-elect would have better ideas.

Anderson would have preferred to have input but said he understood why commissioners would want to start it as soon as possible. The contract is expected to pull nearly \$1 million a year into county coffers.

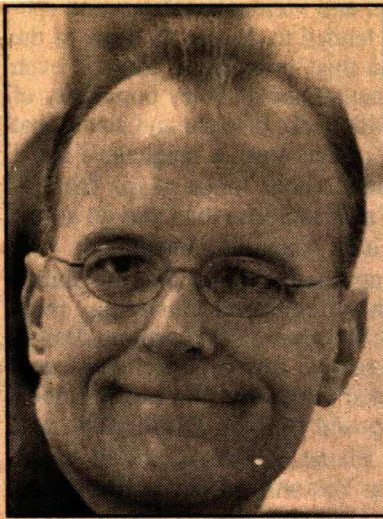
The agreement to go ahead with contract negotiations won by a 3-2 vote.

Johnson said the Cold Springs issue didn't need the input of a new sheriff because "the facility is not the responsibility of the sheriff right now. It's a county building that's not being utilized."

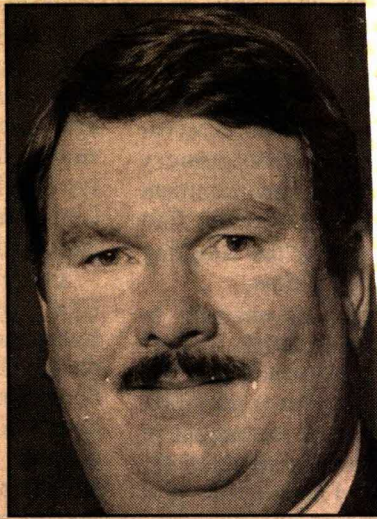
In October, the court released only 25 percent of Williams' budget in an attempt to rein in any over-the-top spending.

"We need to put some kind of spending cap on so that there's no question that new officers coming will have their fair shake of the remainder of the budget year," Johnson said at the time.

The commissioners' deference to the new sheriff speaks both to their lost faith in Williams and to the leap of faith they are apparently taking with Anderson. Not to mention, Bagsby said, an effort to rekindle communications between the court and a department whose leader hasn't shown up at commissioners meetings in more than a year.



David Williams



Dee Anderson

But they've apparently escaped the once-burned twice-shy syndrome. Commissioners are doing what they can to give Anderson input and leeway — even if it means doing things out of the ordinary.

“We’re told we have control over the dollars, but the philosophies and implementation and programs are really in the elected officials’ control,” Commissioner Glen Whitley said.

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Sheriff-elect names right-hand administrator

Terry Grisham has been an executive in the county judge's office for almost 14 years.

BY KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County Sheriff-elect Dee Anderson, on Tuesday appointed long-time friend and Commissioners Court employee Terry Grisham as his executive administrator, his first visible step toward repairing the "broken relationship" between the Sheriff's Department and commissioners.

"We hope to run a very boring department," Grisham said jokingly, referring to the headlines dominated by scandals and open squabbles between Sheriff David Williams and county commissioners over the past few years.

Grisham, 45, has been executive administrator in the county judge's office for almost 14 years. Grisham said he plans to open daily communication with other county agencies and commissioners, who oversee the sheriff's budget.

He will also be bringing information from the Sheriff's Department to the table when discussing legislative issues in Austin, along with addressing staffing problems and jail standards.

Anderson announced Grisham's appointment at Tuesday's regular meeting of the commissioners court.

Commissioners have sharply criticized Williams' unwillingness to attend weekly court meetings, often leaving them without information they need to make decisions regarding the department. Williams usually sent a member of his command staff to represent

the department.

This is the first time the department has had someone in that position, Anderson said. It is not a law enforcement position; Grisham's position in County Judge Tom Vandergriff's office will be transferred to the Sheriff's

Department, with part-time help for Vandergriff until the court decides whether to replace him. Vandergriff, who has two years left in his term, has not said whether he plans to seek re-election.

Grisham's salary of \$86,868, plus a car allowance, will not

"Hopefully, you'll like the butterfly that comes out," he said.

Moments after yesterday's announcement, Vandergriff congratulated his soon-to-be former change with the new arrangement, officials said.

His new position becomes effective after Anderson is sworn in Jan. 1.

"I campaigned on a promise that re-establishing communication with the Commissioners Court and the county was a top priority," Anderson said. "We are very, very serious about the communication that's being established, and about trying to repair the broken relationship between the Sheriff's Department and the Commissioners Court."

Grisham's priority will be to rebuild that relationship and serve as a liaison between the Sheriff's Department and other external entities, such as the city governments and neighborhood groups, Anderson said.

Grisham emphasized that he would not become the spokesman for the sheriff.

"Dee will be the spokesman," he said, adding that Anderson, former spokesman for the Arlington Police Department, is comfortable in that role.

Promising to break open the "hostile cocoon" that has been built around the department, Grisham said he and Anderson seek to rebuild the department into one that "people will quit talking about."

employee and lamented the departure of "a valuable member of my staff."

Grisham will be instrumental in "maximizing his [Anderson's] effectiveness in the important position he'll soon have," Vandergriff said.

Commissioner J.D. Johnson, once a Williams supporter and now among his most vocal critics, also praised the appointment, saying Grisham would be "a real asset to Dee."

"He's very knowledgeable of county government, and that's one of the first things Dee is going to need — some help within the county," Johnson said.

The appointment is also "a step in the right direction" toward better relations between the department and the county, Johnson said.

"He has made that commitment to me and all of his supporters that that's what he wanted to do," he said.

Anderson and Grisham have been friends since ninth grade. Grisham, a single father of a 9-year-old girl, spent four years working for County Judge Roy English before Vandergriff was elected. He also worked at the state Capitol in Austin throughout three legislative sessions and claims a deep background in politics: His mother was secretary for the Democratic Party of Tarrant County in the 1960s.

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Wednesday, December 6, 2000



Star-Telegram/SHARON M. STEINMAN

Sheriff-elect Dee Anderson, right, listens at Tuesday's county commissioners meeting. At left is county support services manager David Barrett.

CHS Grad Publishes Novel

BY SHIRLEY MCKEE

Intended for his college thesis, "Forbidden Happiness," a novel of romance set in an imaginary seaport off the Atlantic, has been published by toExcel and is now available on the market, and Floyd F. Clark can't quite believe he's a real, honest-to-goodness author.

Like many who aspire to write, Floyd had to detour through life a bit before he had the time and the passion to complete the works he began those many years ago in college.

Floyd graduated from Cleburne High School in 1945—when it was still in what is now the Guinn Building—and through the efforts of Principal W. S. Ownsby and some of his other teachers, got his teaching certificate and returned to CHS for a post-graduate course.

And soon, he became a teacher at Fulton School, but his teaching career was cut short by what he considered a miracle. During a lunch at a local sandwich shop, he met Maurice McAdow from North Texas University. He had seen Floyd twirling a baton and wanted to know if Floyd would be interested in attending North Texas University. He explained to McAdow that he had to take care of his parents and money was in short supply. But, as Floyd puts it, God opened the door.

In college, he became interested in writing and in journalism, but life again got in the way as it

often does. He worked as a cost accountant, artist, office manager, director of shipping and receiving and—yes—he got to do some writing because he prepared the labels for the in-house manufactured products for his employer and that writing also included accompanying catalog sheets and brochures.

He also took a stint in law enforcement as a correctional officer in Tarrant County (Correctional Officer of the Year in 1993)—all the while hoping someday he could realize his dream of writing.

When finally, he dusted off his college manuscript and began reworking it into the 100,000 word finished novel, now published and awaiting its audience.

His goal, in his own words, is "to do my best to maintain a quality existence by trying to control my health...lose myself in thoughts by continuing with my writing...and, share the precious memories collected over the decades with my remaining family members and friends...awaiting anxiously any project down any pathway the good Lord may yet direct my footsteps."

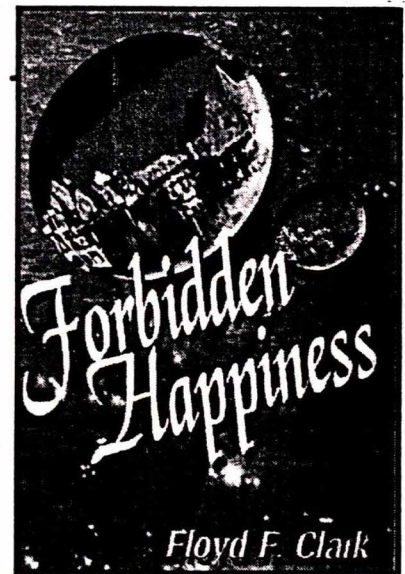
He finishes with a bit of his sparkling wit, "And please, Dear Lord, let me continue dreaming...did you say that was Warner Brothers on the phone?"

Look for Floyd to be signing books at several area bookstores, including Cleburne's Walden-Books, dates and times to be announced later.



New Author

It's been a dream come true for Floyd F. Clark, pictured here before his retirement as a correctional officer in Tarrant County. Also pictured is his novel, "Forbidden Happiness," the culmination of a lifelong dream to write. Look for his book signings in the area in the near future. And help him continue living his dream.

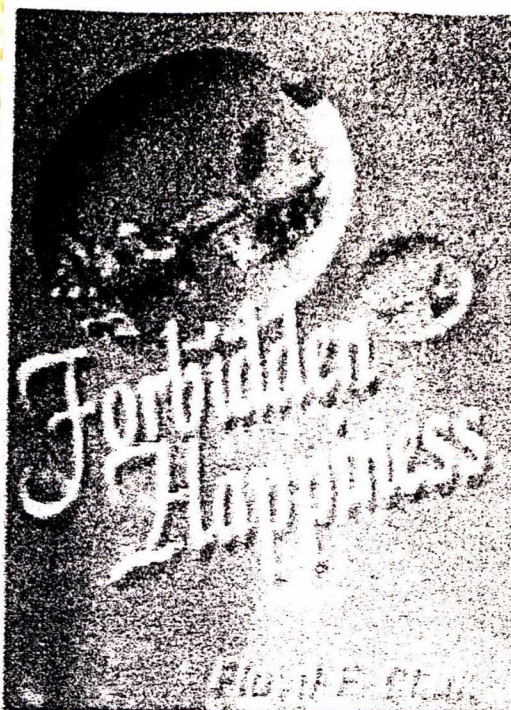


LOCAL AUTHOR'S WORK CAN NOW BE ORDERED THROUGH BARNES AND NOBLE STORES

"FORBIDDEN HAPPINESS," by Fort Worth Author, Floyd F. Clark, is now available for the reading public. The work, originally penned in the late 40s as a writing exercise to be submitted as a college thesis, and packed away for over five decades, was recently published by iUniverse Publishing Company.

The fictionalized love story, dealing with infidelity and adultery, has captured readers attention nationwide, and has established Clark as a published author following a lifetime of writing.

The book, in paper-back format, lists for \$14.95 in book stores, and is also available on the internet at the publisher's web side, iUniverse.com.



HERE'S WHAT READERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THIS BOOK AT BARNES AND NOBLE AND AMAZON WEBSITES.

CUSTOMER REVIEWS - - AN OPEN FORUM:

"The fictionalized story of adultery and infidelity, woven within a family setting, vividly depicts the consequences in a realistic manner. The characters are vividly drawn and easily identified. One of the best romance stories in paper-back on the market today."

S. K.
Houston, Texas
Rating: *****

"I couldn't put the book down until I read the last page. A superb effort at character definition as each one brought to mind a clear picture of someone I actually know."

N. A.
Conoga Park, CA.
Rating: *****

"Beautifully written. It is a vivid interpretation of one of the oldest plagues of our society...Adultery!"

J. L.
Topeka, KS
Rating: *****

"The characters come alive....a tragic love story unveiled with a tinge of mystery. Really enjoyable reading."

J. K.
West Palm Beach, FL
Rating: *****

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2000

■
A unique opportunity awaits deputies at the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department: the chance to commemorate the year 2000 with a nifty specialized badge.

Sheriff **David Williams** authorized Symbol Arts, which makes such items, to offer the attractive badge to commissioned officers who want to purchase one. The seven-point star is gold-colored, heavy cast metal, with the officer's rank on a banner across the top and name across the bottom. A silver "2000" is emblazoned on top of a colored flag in the center.

There's a certain irony in offering it at the Sheriff's Department. The controversial sheriff leaves office on Jan. 1, and whether they are supporters or critics — and the sheriff has plenty of both — none can disagree that with his departure comes the end of an era.

Cold Springs Jail deal welcomed after changes

By **KAREN BROOKS**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A contract allowing a private company to use the Cold Springs Jail has been revamped, and the changes make the deal palatable to nearby homeowners and Tarrant County's incoming sheriff.

Last week a deal between Correctional Services Corp. and county commissioners was threatening to unravel after Sheriff David Williams wouldn't let the county kitchen be used to prepare meals for Cold Springs inmates.

Commissioner Glen Whitley, a supporter of

the contract, also had said he would not vote for it unless Sheriff-elect Dee Anderson, who takes office Jan. 1, approved.

The contract wasn't finished in time for commissioners' weekly Tuesday meeting, so it probably won't be signed until after Anderson takes office. The revised contract is supposed to include a provision allowing use of the kitchen and provides safety measures that residents had wanted.

The sheriff, the commissioners and Correctional Services Corp. all must sign the contract. Some commissioners were concerned

(More on JAIL on Page 9B)

last week about binding Anderson to a contract signed by Williams. The lease would start at about the beginning of March.

Anderson asked commissioners to address two concerns: screening of prisoners and an escape-notification policy.

If those two issues are in the final contract, Anderson said Tuesday, he most likely will sign it.

The company has been criticized for its slow notification of escapes at the Mansfield boot camp, which it also runs.

"This is unprecedented because I'm not officially in office yet," Anderson said of his input. "I'm trying to work with them and not against them in this situation."

Commissioners said they agreed that prisoners need to be adequately screened, and that a clause should be included in the contract providing for swift and severe penalties if CSC does not immediately notify police and sheriff's officials of any escapes.

Those two issues are addressed in the final contract, County Purchaser Jack Beacham said.

Residents who live near the facility celebrated the revamped contract.

"Yes!" exclaimed Glenn Spoons, vice chairwoman of the Greenway Neighborhood Development Corp., a group of about 500 residents near the jail.

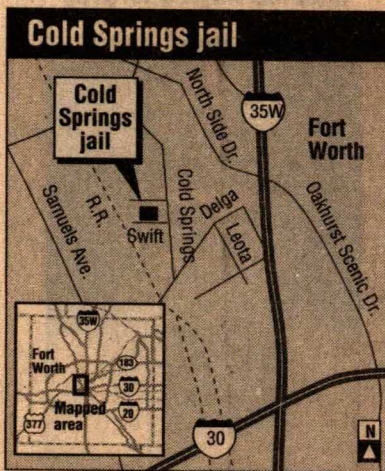
Spoons wanted Anderson to have input in the contract and, after hearing of the changes, praised him for considering the residents' safety.

Attention to prisoner screening — which includes addressing immigration-service prisoners whose criminal records are difficult to track — and the escape

Negotiators added the kitchen back into the contract after Mid States, the food service provider at Tarrant County Jail, said it would pay the county 8 cents per meal as a reimbursement for any extra burden placed on the county from the use of the Cold Springs Jail.

Williams had been concerned about extra wear and tear on the facility that would result from feeding the additional 300-plus inmates expected to be housed at Cold Springs. The on-site kitchen at Cold Springs would have needed to be revamped at a cost to the county to be used. Not including the county's kitchen in the Cold Springs contract would have knocked down the county's yearly income through the deal from \$922,204 to \$888,566.

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Star-Telegram/DON COOK

policy "addressed our concerns as residents around the security and the safety of the community," she said.

Commissioners were scheduled to approve the contract yesterday that would have allowed CSC to run the jail for minimum-security state prisoners. Anderson will sign because commissioners aren't scheduled to meet again until the new year. Anderson takes office Jan. 1.

Saturday, December 16, 2000 /

County jailer indicted in cell incident

By **GABRIELLE CRIST**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A Tarrant County jailer accused of kicking a mentally ill inmate who was being held in a suicide prevention cell has been indicted.

Jimmy Sparkman, 47, awaits trial on the misdemeanor charge of official oppression. Computer records do not list an attorney for Sparkman, who could not be located to comment.

In September, inmate Roberto Arista was hanging his arms out of the food port, a small opening about knee height on the cell door that is used to pass inmates their food. Arista was in a suicide prevention cell because he had tried to kill himself while in custody, Tarrant County sheriff's investigators said.

Sparkman repeatedly told Arista to put his arms inside his cell, but Arista ignored the order, investigators said.

"Finally, the officer lost his temper and kicked the inmate's arms, apparently several times," said a Tarrant County sheriff's spokesman, Capt. Dave Barrington.

Other jailers and sheriff's deputies witnessed the assault, investigators said.

Arista has been transferred to the Vernon campus of the North Texas State Hospital, after a jury found him incompetent to stand trial on a pending charge of family violence, according to criminal computer records.

Sparkman was fired, investigators said.

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Sheriff gives his successor tour of job

Williams welcomes Anderson to department

BY KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Sheriff-elect Dee Anderson received more of an education than he had expected Tuesday during an eight-hour tour and briefing of the large operation that he'll soon command.

He discovered a little more about the man he defeated in the GOP primary and will succeed Jan. 1.

Anderson and a small entourage spent the day with Sheriff David Williams, who guided them on "an executive briefing" through the Sheriff's Department's three jails, booking processes and a host of presentations by the department's top command.

The visit ended with a 90-minute private conversation between the two men that Anderson called "wide-ranging" and "enlightening."

"He was much more forthcoming than a lot of people would

(More on SHERIFF on Page 5B)

SHERIFF

From Page 1B

have believed he would have been," Anderson said. "He was very reflective, he was honest, open. He didn't shy away from my tough questions. We spent a lot of time talking about the past eight years and his tenure.

"He was very willing to talk about triumphs and mistakes."

Williams said the day spent with Anderson was productive.

"We covered much ground," Williams said. "I think the staff did a fine job in presenting an overview of our department, and I enjoyed my visit with Sheriff-elect Anderson."

Williams has been criticized for years over the way he has operated the jail, over his relationship with county commissioners, and his avoidance of the public and news media.

Much of the criticism in the past year came from Anderson and seven other candidates who jostled to oust him from office. Williams lost his bid for a third term to Anderson in the March Republican primary. Anderson later won a solid victory over Democrat Luther Perry in the Nov. 7 election.

In spite of the potential for tension, Anderson said, Williams expressed "a sincere desire to see that I succeed in the job, and he couldn't have been more gracious."

"He certainly offered to, if he could, assist me in the future and

welcomed me to contact him," Anderson said. "He couldn't have been nicer."

Anderson was treated to an introduction to a department with a \$64.18 million budget and 1,240 employees.

"It is a huge operation, and there are so many different facets of the department, and they do so many different things," he said. "We could have spent a day learning about each of the areas."

The day started with remarks by Williams, who discussed the history of the Sheriff's Department, the deputies who had been killed in the line of duty since records were kept in the 1930s and the complexities of the department, said Capt. John Dalton, the department's spokesman.

Williams accompanied Anderson and Terry Grisham, Anderson's newly appointed executive administrator, throughout the day, but left the presentations on department operations to those in charge, said Dalton, a member of Williams' command staff.

Dalton said he detected "for myself, no tension whatsoever."

"Everybody was congenial and professional," Dalton said. "Politics makes strange bedfellows, but most of the people that were here are professional law enforcement officers, and we have a tendency to get along with each other."

Anderson said he sensed no tension or anxiety among the rank and file, either.

"We were welcomed wherever we went," he said.

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2000



CHEERS & JEERS



Cheers: To Deputy Rhonda Bannister, Constable Zane Hilger, Lt. Randall Bannister with the Sheriff's Department and Haltom City officers Robert Shiflett and Tony Miller for helping Oct. 31 with the Glenview Baptist Church Fall Festival. They not only helped the families feel safe, but we really appreciate the time they took to interact with the children.

J.J. Willingham, North Richland Hills

Williams applies for Marshall police job

The outgoing Tarrant sheriff is one of about two dozen seeking the chief's post in the East Texas town.

BY JACK DOUGLAS JR.
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Sheriff David Williams, who steps down Sunday after eight years as Tarrant County's controversial top law officer, has applied to become the next police chief in the East Texas town of Marshall.

Currently in charge of a 1,240-member sheriff's force and the chief jailer for about 3,000 prisoners, Williams is one of about two dozen applicants for the chief's job with the 50-officer Marshall Police Department.

City offices in Marshall, which has a population of about 25,000, were closed Tuesday, and it could not be determined what the police chief's salary is. On his application form, Williams said he makes \$106,000 a year, plus a car, as Tarrant County sheriff.

Williams lost his bid for a third four-year term as sheriff in the May Republican primary. He and other candidates lost to Dee Anderson.

Anderson, who was spokesman for the Arlington Police Department, won the general election and will become sheriff just after midnight on New Year's Day.

Williams could not be reached Tuesday to comment.

During a rare public appearance at a recent awards ceremony for sheriff's employees,



Williams

Williams declined to be specific about his job plans.

"Right now, I'm just going to see what's out there," he said. "One thing I do hope to complete is to get my college finished up."

The police chief's job in Marshall became vacant about two months ago when Charles "Chuck" Williams, the city's chief for 18 years, died of cancer.

Chuck Williams, who was not related to the sheriff, had caused a stir during Gov. George W. Bush's presidential campaign. Bush had appointed Williams chairman of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Education, a powerful police group. But Williams was forced to resign in April, during the thick of the presidential race, after he acknowledged making racially insensitive remarks during a 1998 court deposition.

Other applicants for the Marshall job include Capt. John Dalton, a commander and spokesman for the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department; and Wayne Gay, former campus police chief for the University of Texas at Arlington, according to copies of employment application forms acquired by the *News Messenger* in Marshall.

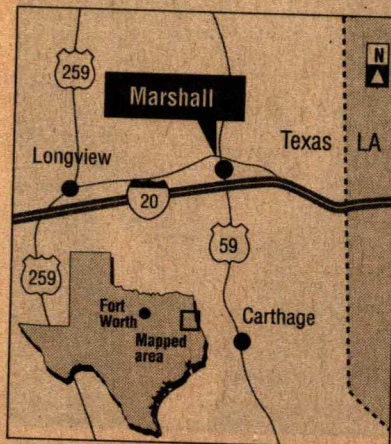
Neither Dalton nor Gay could be reached Tuesday to comment.

Marshall Mayor Audrey Kariel said Tuesday that she knew nothing about Williams' application and had not heard of the controversies during his tenure in Tarrant County.

Asked about Williams' chance

WILLIAMS

From Page 1B



Star-Telegram/DON COOK

of getting the job, the mayor said: "I would have to think about that and compare it to the other choices. He sounds like a fine man, but I don't really know him and haven't really studied the other applicants."

A decision on the job will probably be made by late January or early February, Kariel said.

Williams' tenure as sheriff got off to a rocky start when, only minutes after taking the oath of office in the early hours of Jan. 1, 1993, he fired several top commanders in his department.

Later, Williams fought for and received a helicopter patrol division for the Sheriff's Department, only to have it grounded in tragedy in September 1997 when one of the helicopters crashed, killing two deputies.

The sheriff alienated members of the Tarrant County Commissioners Court, who were once among his staunchest supporters, when he clashed with them over his department's budget, personnel and fleet of patrol vehicles.

Commissioners also questioned his turning over several hundred thousand dollars to a preacher friend to provide ministry services to inmates and

guards at the sprawling Tarrant County Jail.

And Williams made headlines a year ago when it was disclosed that he was absent without leave and accused of desertion while in the Army in 1976. His campaign speeches, starting when he ran for his first term as sheriff in 1992, touted his years in the military. "I wouldn't trade the experience for anything," Williams once told the *Star-Telegram*.

In his Marshall application, Williams noted his experience as a "senior military policeman" with "classified secret security clearance." But he did not include the circumstances surrounding his last discharge from the military, saying only that it was the "end of [his] tour of duty."

Williams' father, 70-year-old Gene Williams, said Tuesday that he expects his son to remain in law enforcement. "It's about all he knows," the elder Williams said from his home in Norman, Okla.

Referring to the media's close scrutiny of his son over the years, the father jokingly added, "The only other thing I could think he could do is go to work at a newspaper as a reporter, because he's had a lot of experience with newspapers and reporters."

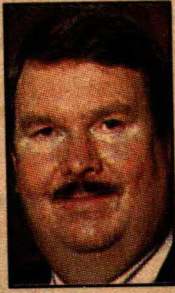
Williams' former wife, Rhonda Strom, said she expects him to fare well after leaving the Sheriff's Department. "He's going to go on and be just fine. ... Being sheriff is not his whole life; his family is his whole life.

"Whatever he goes on to do, whoever gets him, will be lucky to have him," Strom said from her home in O'Fallon, Ill.

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A NEW ROLE

Tarrant sheriff-elect prepares to shift from spokesman duties



Anderson

By KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — In 14 years as a police spokesman, Tarrant County Sheriff-elect Dee Anderson never had the last word.

"I'm not used to expressing my own opinions," said Anderson, the former spokesman for the Arlington Police Department. "It will be interesting to see how it changes and

how I feel about the change, and how reluctant I'll be to step out there and say, 'Well, here's what I think about this.' Because that certainly hasn't been my role in the past."

Anderson takes over as Tarrant County sheriff at midnight Dec. 31. He will run a department with a \$64.18 million budget and 1,240 employees. His last day at the

(More on ANDERSON on Page 4B)

Arlington Police Department is Jan. 2.

He has strong opinions about the beleaguered Sheriff's Department but hesitates to specify solutions until he can talk with employees, the command staff and county commissioners. He promises that nothing will be exempted from his scrutiny.

"Every operation in the department will be evaluated from top to bottom," he said.

Anderson said his priorities are realigning the command staff and updating technology at the department, he said.

He also wants to ask the county commissioners for a centralized record division, saying he was "flabbergasted" that there is none.

Some officials have said he plans to scrutinize specialty teams, including hostage negotiators and special tactics teams, although Anderson declined in an interview to single out any area.

He is also adamant that there should be no "duplication of services" between the Sheriff's Department and any of the 40 or so local police departments.

He offers examples of ways those agencies could use the department — traffic interdiction, perhaps, or a qualified crime-scene lab — but he won't say

anything for sure.

Anderson also praised the dedication of the department's employees and said that there are "a number of things there that do work," such as the warrant division, and that he doesn't want to "rush in there and hurt something that's good."

"Our catch phrase right now is 'Go slow,'" he said. "The temptation is to run in there like the building's on fire. ... But it's been running. We don't need to go in there and make drastic changes on Day One. ... It's not like it's on the verge of falling apart."

His acknowledged reluctance to hold forth translates into a management style that Anderson said he learned from years of diplomacy in Arlington.

Former Police Chief David Kunkle, who worked with Anderson for 13 years, said Anderson was not technically a manager but was an integral part of the decision-making in the department's upper echelons.

Kunkle, who was 34 when he took over the department in the mid-1980s, said he involved Anderson and others in decisions as a matter of survival. As young as he was, there was always somebody older and wiser on his staff.

"In my opinion, the more people you bring to the table, the more likely you are to hear a variety of alternatives, one of which you hope will be the right choice

to make," said Kunkle, now a deputy city manager in Arlington.

The most visible step in that direction is Anderson's plan to realign the command staff, which he says is "too vertical." He hopes to balance power by putting a few more people in equal positions at the top, he said.

"If I've learned anything, I've learned to surround yourself with smart people and listen to them," Anderson said. "You can get so inwardly focused in law enforcement. If I've got 10 people in a room ... and nine of my people think they're right and I'm the only one who thinks the other way, I may be the sheriff, but I certainly am smart enough to realize that I'm probably not right."

Anderson said the department can expect command staff changes within a few months. Several weeks ago, he named his lifelong friend Terry Grisham, a longtime executive in the county judge's office, as his executive administrator, bringing a civilian into the department's administrative offices for the first time.

Already, two of the top brass — Capt. David Barrington and Capt. John Dalton — have applied elsewhere, anticipating a demotion after years of supporting Williams.

"I really don't think we had too much of a grasp as to exactly what the [command] structure was at the Sheriff's Department, if indeed there was a formal struc-

ture," County Judge Tom Vandergriff said. "I surely do want to be open-minded about it all and give Mr. Anderson every chance to visit with us about his plans."

Revamping technology will take a little longer, but the prospect pleases County Commissioner Marti VanRavenswaay.

"It is so out of date that they still have dome terminals," she said. "If there's a worst-case scenario, that department exemplifies it."

ANDERSON

From Page 1B

In the past year, the county allocated \$100,000 toward a new computer-automated dispatch system and earmarked \$250,000 from a local block grant for a central record system — which does not yet exist, officials said.

Patrol cars have computers so officers can file reports from the field, but the computers aren't part of any centralized network. The county is studying a county-wide criminal justice information system, which will include Sheriff's Department records and reports.

Anderson said he hopes to provide leadership in creating a state-of-the-art department and sees the past year as only a first step.

"Throughout the department, from top to bottom, I'm not sure technology has been pushed to the front as it needs to be," he said. "We need to just really, really get aggressive."

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2000



CHEERS & JEERS



Cheers: To Deputy Sheriff J.E. Martz for the Christmas spirit he showed when I and a group of the worst bridge players in the Metroplex got lost Dec. 16 in far south Tarrant County. It was obvious to the good deputy that we were never going to get to our host's home before midnight. He said, "Follow me," and took us right to where we were going.

Richard and Sue Ward, Jim and Paula Packer,
and Glenn and Joyce Knight, Hurst

■ LETTERS, FAXES AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR

The one about the sheriff

I read the joke of 2000 in Wednesday's City Final edition: "Williams applies for Marshall police job." I hope that the last laugh is *not* on Marshall!

George Nilan
Fort Worth

CHANGING of the GUARD

Anderson takes reins as sheriff

By JACK DOUGLAS JR.
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — After eight tumultuous years in office, David Williams stepped down as Tarrant County sheriff Monday, and former Arlington policeman Dee Anderson took over, promising a new era of stability for the 1,240-member Sheriff's Department.

As Anderson toured the county jail and introduced himself to jailers working the New Year's holiday, deputies drove out to Williams' home in Watauga to pick up his unmarked patrol car.

Williams had been told that all county-owned property issued to him, including the car, had to be returned by 12:01 a.m. Monday, according to Jack Beacham, the county's purchasing agent. It was not clear why the sheriff's office did not

return the patrol vehicle, a 1995 Chevrolet Caprice, by then.

Beacham said he also does not know whether Williams had returned county property from his home, which included computer equipment and what has been described as a submachine gun.

Asked what Williams was doing with a machine gun at his home, Beacham said, "Who knows?"

Contacted at his home Monday night, Williams would not say whether he still had property that needed to be turned in to the coun-

ty. "I really don't think it's appropriate to talk to you about those things right now," he said.

County officials, according to Beacham, were also looking for seven hand-held radios that were unaccounted for during a recent inventory of property at the Sheriff's Department.

At the jail, deputies welcomed their new boss, Anderson, who beat Williams and several other candidates in the Republican primary in March and then defeated Democrat Luther Perry in the Nov. 7 general election.

"We're just all excited. I think the morale is up today," Deputy Derald Coomer said, moments after greeting Anderson in the area of the jail where prisoners are brought in.

Sheriff's Sgt. Don Kraul, a 15-year veteran, said he is optimistic that Anderson will bring stability to the department. "Anything's got to be an improvement," Kraul said, referring to Williams' tenure, marked by numerous controversies, including one involving a fatal helicopter crash, and by frequent fights with county commissioners and the funding of a questionable jail ministry program.

"The past eight years have been interesting; they have been eventful," jailer Mike Scheets said, adding, "We welcome the new change."

On Monday, seconds after midnight, Anderson was sworn in as the county's top cop by family friend Stewart Milner, chief municipal judge in Arlington, during a ceremony at Ander-

son's home in Kennedale. The new sheriff then redeputized three top commanders in a formality required for all deputies whenever a new administration begins.

Anderson said he will make changes in the department's chain of command, but not before interviewing current commanders. He said it is a "safe assumption" that his administration will include officers who are currently with the Arlington Police Department, where he worked as an officer and as its longtime spokesman.

"I will not surround myself with 'yes men' who think they know what I want to hear," he said in his new office in downtown Fort Worth. "I do want to hear what people have to say, both the good things and the bad things."

Anderson also indicated that he will not have a paid ministry service for inmates and guards at the jail, as initiated by Williams, but will "rely heavily" on volunteers from the clergy to provide religious services and counseling.

Along with restructuring his chain of command and making changes in the jail, Anderson must decide what to do with several items of "intelligence equipment" purchased under Will-



iams' watch, said Terry Grisham, executive administrator for the new sheriff.

That equipment includes an ice chest hollowed out to hold a tiny camera and transmitter, and a video recorder built into a 2-by-4 board, both used for undercover surveillance, Grisham said.

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Star-Telegram/JOYCE MARSHALL

Judge Stewart Milner, left, swears in Dee Anderson as Tarrant County sheriff Monday just after midnight at the Anderson home in Kennedale.

Witnessing the event are Anderson's son Ben, daughter Hannah and wife, Rebecca. At top are Anderson's new badge and identification card.

Tuesday, January 2, 2001

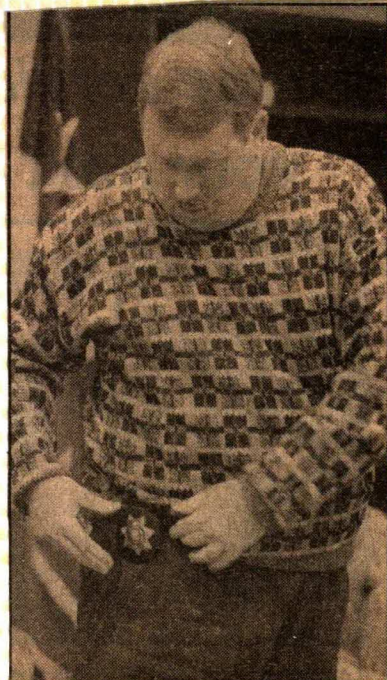
“I will not surround myself with ‘yes men’ who think they know what I want to hear.”

— Dee Anderson, new Tarrant County sheriff



Star-Telegram/JOYCE MARSHALL

Deputy Derald Coomer, left, visits with Sheriff Dee Anderson on Monday during a tour of jail facilities.



The new sheriff affixes his badge before taking the jail tour.

MEDIA SCRUTINY

Sheriff attends court, holds open meeting

BY BECHETTA JACKSON
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County Judge Tom Vandergriff and commissioners Marti VanRavenswaay, Dionne Bagsby and Glen Whitley all were recognized at the weekly Commissioners Court meeting on Tuesday.

Vandergriff and VanRavenswaay received 10-year service pins. Bagsby and Whitley, recently re-elected, took the oath of office.

But it was new Sheriff Dee Anderson who

(More on SHERIFF on Page 8B)



Star-Telegram/RON T. ENNIS

Sheriff Dee Anderson leads Tuesday's staff meeting.

got most of the media attention by merely showing up.

"Being here is a very important part of my job," said Anderson, who pledged to attend the meetings regularly and keep an open line of communication between his department and the commissioners.

"They're the budgeting arm of our operation, so it's critical that we work together," he said. "To not cooperate with people that set and control your budget is ludicrous."

Commissioners welcomed the new spirit of cooperation.

"It's wonderful, really refreshing," Bagsby said.

VanRavenswaay said she believed it had been about two years since she last saw former sheriff David Williams at a meeting.

After the meeting, Anderson told reporters that the county-owned 1995 Chevrolet Caprice that Williams had not returned before New Year's Day had been picked up on Monday. County property, including a submachine gun was found inside the vehicle, he said.

In trying to show that he is serious about working with the media and other departments, Anderson invited reporters, commissioners and other department heads to his first command-staff meeting.

"I promise you, these meetings won't all look like this," Anderson told the captains and lieutenants who sat around a table occasionally glancing at reporters and people from the district attorney's office

and purchasing and auditing departments. "I campaigned on the fact that we're going to run an open department, and hopefully this is evidence of that," Anderson said.

He urged his officers to talk to and cooperate with reporters, and said a room on the third floor of the Criminal Courts building will be turned into a media room.

"For those of you who are not used to dealing with the media, get comfortable with it because we're going to deal with them openly, honestly and above board," Anderson said. He said he plans to change the structure of the command staff, update technology and cut down drastically on overtime costs brought on by staff shortages in the Tarrant County Jail.

"We need to keep overtime to a bare minimum," he told Chief Deputy Savala Swanson, who oversees jail operations. "If we all have to work a shift in the jail one day a week, that's what we'll do."

Of the 67 vacancies in the sheriff's department, 55 of them are in the jail, sheriff's officials said.

Anderson also said he plans to take a look at all significant felony cases investigated by the department in the past 24 months. And he hopes to have an independent firm conduct an extensive study to find out exactly what it costs to run the jail.

"If you see me making a mistake on anything, please tell me," Anderson told his staff. "I won't hold it against you."

"And if you have a concern or a problem, come see me. My door will be open."

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Slain man had been informant for sheriff

North Richland Hills police say they don't have a motive for the Christmas Day killing.

BY DOMINGO RAMIREZ JR.
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS

— A Fort Worth man who was fatally shot Christmas Day in a motel room had recently been an informant for the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department, an official said Wednesday.

Brandon Boyce Holcombe, 39, worked with authorities from Nov. 1 to Dec. 18 but was released as an informant because he did not provide useful information, said Chief Deputy Hank Pope of the Sheriff's Department.

"ATF had brought him to us," Pope said, referring to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. "But nothing came from his work with us."

Confidential informants are registered and fingerprinted by law enforcement agencies. An informant's name is kept secret if his or her work leads to an arrest, conviction or resolution of a crime, authorities said.

Holcombe never provided information that led to an arrest or a conviction, Pope said.

North Richland Hills police declined to comment about whether Holcombe's involvement with the Sheriff's Department led to his death.

"We still don't have a motive," said Larry Irving, a North Richland Hills Police Department spokesman.

Jeremy Justin Rooney, 26, of Keller has been charged with capital murder in connection with the slaying.

Police continued their search Wednesday for a second suspect, Larry Leroy Richardson, 28, of Fort Worth. A capital murder warrant has been issued for Richardson in connection with the case.

An employee found Holcombe's body about 7:30 p.m. Christmas Day in a room at Country Inn & Suites in the 5100 block of Thaxton Parkway in North Richland Hills.

Holcombe was shot several times in the head and torso with a small-caliber gun, authorities said.

Police said they believe that Holcombe was shot about 4:30 p.m. that day, when a motel guest heard muffled gunshots. Police believe that Holcombe had been at the motel since Christmas Eve, though he did not sign for the room.

At the time of the shooting, Holcombe was free from Tarrant County Jail on \$2,500 bail, according to court records. He was arrested in mid-December on suspicion of assault with bodily injury to a family member, with previous convictions for a similar offense.

He had been sentenced to 180 days in jail after pleading guilty in May to possession of a controlled substance in Arlington, according to court records.

Rooney was arrested Saturday after Arlington police shot him during a five-hour standoff at an apartment.

The standoff began Saturday afternoon when Arlington and North Richland Hills police tried to serve a capital murder warrant on Rooney at the Waterford Apartments in the 900 block of East Randol Mill Road in Arlington. Police said Rooney told them that he was armed with an AK-47 assault rifle.

Rooney threatened officers and waved a gun at them. After Rooney was shot, authorities learned that the weapon was a toy.

North Richland Hills police have declined to release details about what led investigators to charge Rooney and Richardson.

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Anderson demotes three Williams aides

Ex-sheriff's bid to protect them backfires

BY DEANNA BOYD
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — An apparent 11th-hour attempt by former Tarrant County Sheriff David Williams to protect the jobs of three administrative supervisors backfired and resulted in their demotions Thursday, new Sheriff Dee Anderson said.

Anderson said he met with county human resources officials and represen-

tatives from the district attorney's office after learning that Williams had filed paperwork Friday with the Civil Service Commission to reclassify the three supervisors, who had been exempt from civil service protection.

The three are Larry Hester, Williams' chief of the general services bureau; Dave Barrington, supervisor of the criminal investigation division; and John

(More on SHERIFF on Page 6B)

Dalton, director of the administrative operations division.

"The problem ... is that there was no way these jobs were civil service," Anderson said. "They were never advertised. They were never competed for."

As a result, Anderson said, he was forced to return Hester and Dalton to their previous civil service position of lieutenant. Barrington was bumped to deputy, he said.

Williams' "intention was to help them and protect them because of their fear they would lose their jobs," Anderson said. "In an effort to protect them, he ended up hurting them in the long run."

Barrington said he intends to appeal the decision to the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department Civil Service Commission.

Hester said he will probably appeal the decision but was still waiting for information about his unexpected transfer.

"As yet, we haven't been notified as to what our assignments are," Hester said. "I was told that I was reassigned as a lieutenant, and that is all I know."

Dalton, who also worked as Williams' spokesman, declined to comment.

Williams could not be reached.

Most of the Sheriff's Department's 1,240-member force is protected under civil service provisions, meaning that their employment was secure after Anderson took office.

Under state guidelines, the sheriff has the right to exempt up to 10 positions from civil service rules.

Commission Chairman Richard De Otte said that after business hours Friday, Williams hand-delivered to him a package requesting that Hester, Barrington and Dalton be removed from the list of exempt positions.

"Up until recently, [Williams] had nine as I understand it," De Otte said. "This change that he made on Friday would have brought that list down to six. It was certainly within his right to do that."

The package included letters from the three officers requesting that Williams make such a change, De Otte said. The officers became concerned after a *Star-Telegram* article quoted officials close to Anderson as saying the three men were in danger of losing their jobs in the new administration, he said.

"These are three guys who have served the county and have enjoyed serving under Sheriff Williams ... for however long they've been with the department," De Otte said. "They got concerned at the last minute and asked the sheriff [Williams] to help because they were concerned for their jobs."

De Otte said he plans to talk to Anderson; Gerald Wright, director of county human resources; and the Civil Service Commission "to figure out the best thing and right and legal thing to do."

"Since I'm the chairman of the commission and it was after hours, it was bleak that they could just hand the thing to me and that would make it an occurrence under Williams' watch," De Otte said. "I wouldn't do anything until I've communicated with everybody else."

Anderson said he intended to evaluate the department for at least 30 days before making any staffing changes. While the new sheriff said he may have come to the same decision regarding the three officers after that evaluation time, "I certainly didn't want to do it today."

Anderson said he told the three men in a meeting Thursday morning that he will look at three options: opening their positions to civil service, at which time they could compete; eliminating their positions as part of a department reorganization; or re-exempt the positions and appoint others.

Anderson called the matter "unfortunate for everyone involved."

County Commissioner J.D. Johnson declined to comment on the new sheriff's actions, saying that whatever Anderson did was his prerogative. However, Johnson said he found it "confusing" that Williams made only three top commanders civil service.

"If he was going to take them off, he should have taken them all off, not just three," Johnson said. "I thought it was strange, but it's no different than the other things he has done. I'm not surprised."

Jail again in control of overtime

Sheriff's officials say boss deserves credit

By **KAREN BROOKS**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — The most serious budget concern in the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department, runaway overtime, appears to be back under control — a trend department officials say results directly from the new sheriff.

Less than 30 days after the entire year's overtime budget was depleted just two months into the new fiscal year, overtime costs have been slashed in half and are continuing to decline.

In early December, overtime was running roughly \$32,000 a week. By Dec. 27, the number was \$18,048. A week later, it was down to \$17,052, according to county auditors.

Sheriff Dee Anderson, who was sworn in Jan. 1, has given jail officials the authority to pull employees from other departments during downtime for work at the jail to continue driving down overtime costs.

"Long way to go yet, but it's

looking a lot better," County Commissioner J.D. Johnson said.

If the trend continues, county auditors — who once worried they would have to use emergency funds to keep paying sheriff's employees — say the department's salary and overtime budget should stay on track until the new fiscal year starts in October.

Auditors said the savings in the jail payroll from vacant priority positions — which cause most of the overtime — amounts to about \$15,000 a week. The overtime costs need to stay within that number to stay under budget.

During a command staff meeting Tuesday afternoon, Anderson praised supervisors for doing what they could to keep overtime down.

"I congratulate you and encourage you to keep digging," Anderson said.

Eliminating overtime concerns was one of Anderson's priorities when he entered office, he said.

Although that trend was under way when he got there, some supervisors said Anderson made it easier by letting them know he would let them decide what is best for staffing their departments.

Former Sheriff David Williams often micromanaged the way they covered their vacancies, officials said, at one point directing the entire confinement division to work six-day weeks.

"Just having the sheriff say, 'Guys, do what you need to do,'" said Chief Deputy Savala Swanson, who oversees jail operations. "Everyone's taking a sigh of relief."

Vacancies in the jail have been cited as the main cause of overtime. Of the 651 positions, an average of 10 percent have been vacant.

This week, there are 57 vacancies in the jail, including support services and booking along with jailers, officials said.

Williams, who lost his bid for reelection in March, ordered six-day workweeks for every jail employee in October. The order lasted through November, Swanson said.

Around that time, auditors, who said weekly overtime was \$80,000 a week, began to meet with jail supervisors and command staff to identify wasteful staffing.

Instead of calling in people to cover every position all the time, supervisors identified "priority one" positions and only filled those open shifts, said Ron Bertel of the county auditors office.

Changes were also made in training and vacation schedules, officials said, and Swanson is putting together a list of about 20 employees from various departments to pull in if he needs them.

Most employees started working in the jail, he said, so training and certification are not an issue.

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Death in boot camp puts jail lease at risk

By KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Accusations that neglect caused the death of an inmate at a Mansfield boot camp last week may slam the door on a million-dollar deal for Tarrant County to lease its long-shuttered Cold Springs Correctional Facility, officials said Tuesday.

County commissioners in the fall awarded Correctional Ser-

vices Corp., the private company that runs the boot camp, the contract to operate the 384-bed Cold Springs facility for state inmates.

After months of negotiations and some last-minute changes, the contract, signed by CSC officials, was received by county officials Tuesday.

But all five members of the Commissioners Court and the

(More on LEASE on Page 7B)

sheriff now say they won't approve it unless the investigation into the death last week of 18-year-old Bryan D. Alexander — whose family says boot camp officials failed to get him proper medical treatment for pneumonia — shows that CSC was not at fault.

County officials' concerns about contracting with CSC for new prisoners were heightened last week when several district judges began pulling offenders out of the facility after Alexander died.

"Until some of this can be resolved, I'm not willing to grant them any kind of a contract with the county," said Commissioner Glen Whitley, one of the deal's original supporters. "They've obviously done a terrible job — or, at least from what I've read, they seem to not have a stellar performance record."

Commissioner J.D. Johnson and County Judge Tom Vandergriff, whose support helped push through the original contract, said Tuesday that they agreed with Whitley.

The boot camp has gone through a year of turmoil, including escapes and allegations of drill instructors sexually assaulting female inmates, and has struggled with staffing. Similar issues plagued the facility in the mid-1990s.

Company officials said Tuesday that they had not heard about commissioners' concerns and defended their record in Tarrant County.

"The commissioners certainly should proceed at a pace that is acceptable to them," said James Blattery, chief executive officer of

CSC, which is based in Florida. "The facility at Cold Springs is a minimum-security facility, and we're certainly capable of operating that facility to the satisfaction of the commissioners, and operating it in a safe manner for the offenders that are placed there and the community in which it is located."

Commissioners Dionne Bagsby and Marti VanRavenswaay voted against the CSC contract last year, saying they were concerned about problems at the boot camp and expressed reservations about leasing out the jail to private management. But their opposition did little to halt the contract, which was approved on a 3-2 vote.

District judges said they were rethinking whether to award CSC the contract to continue running the boot camp.

The contract, which is awarded every three years and renewed annually, is approved by a panel of Tarrant County's 19 criminal court judges. The judges have oversight of the Tarrant County Community Corrections Center, which houses four county-run programs, including the shock incarceration boot camp in Mansfield. The boot camp accommodates 120 trainees and provided voluntary substance-abuse programs to the inmates.

The boot camp contract is scheduled to expire on Aug. 31. About five companies are expected to submit proposals by the Jan. 18 deadline, officials said.

CSC has run the boot camp since it opened in February 1992. The contract was renewed in 1995 and 1998.

This time, however, district judges are hesitating to throw their support behind CSC again.

Sen. Chris Harris, R-Arlington, asked last week for a special prose-

cutor to oversee an investigation into whether boot camp officials were negligent in Alexander's death, county officials said. Harris did not return telephone calls seeking comment.

"Before we make any decision, we're going to have to see what the investigation shows," state District Judge Sharen Wilson said. "Obviously, this is a horrible concern."

The judges are scheduled to discuss the CSC contract at their monthly meeting Monday, although probation officials won't make their recommendation to the judges until at least mid-February. Commissioners probably won't discuss the Cold Springs contract until then.

The CSC contract at Cold Springs would bring in about \$922,000 a year for the county.

CSC won the contract in August, beating Waco-based Civigenics, whose bid was around \$200,000 lower than the CSC proposal. Officials said at the time that the decision came down to dollars.

If commissioners decide to withdraw their support from CSC, they would start negotiating with Civigenics.

Cold Springs has been vacant since 1995, when it was closed because of low inmate populations. It costs the county roughly \$150,000 a year to remain open.

Correctional Services Corp. was started in 1989 in Delaware and went public in 1994. The company is in charge of 11,500 beds and is among the largest jail and prison management companies in the country. The company has 14 facilities in Texas and 57 nationwide.

Staff writer Anthony Spangler contributed to this report.

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Death of boot camp probationer leads judges to transfer over half of inmates

By ANTHONY SPANGLER
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

On judges' orders, 45 inmates at a Mansfield boot camp have been moved to Tarrant County Jail since an inmate at the facility died of pneumonia last week.

On Friday, 35 inmates were transferred to the jail. Ten more were transferred Tuesday, leaving 43 inmates in the military-style program.

Nineteen criminal court judges have oversight of the boot camp for probationers ages 17 to 25.

Boot camp inmate Bryan D. Alexander, 18, died of pneumonia on Jan. 9, two days after being admitted to John Peter Smith Hospital. His death came a little more than a week before county officials are to review the boot camp contract held by Correctional Services Corp., a Florida-based contractor that runs the program at the Tarrant County Community Corrections Center.

Camp administrator Randy Tate said moving the inmates to jail was unnecessary.

"Some of the inmates were crying because they had to leave. Jerking people out of here has everyone wondering why," Tate said.

He blamed some local news organizations for falsely reporting that Alexander's illness was contagious. A preliminary medical examiner's report does not indicate the illness was contagious.

"On Friday, we allowed everyone a chance to see the doctor," Tate said. "About five or six of those inmates were diagnosed with flu or cold symptoms. We are confident the concerns are unfounded."

District Judge Everett Young said he and District Judge Wayne

Salvant removed their inmates from the camp. Young said he issued the order after Alexander's death, but he declined to elaborate. Salvant could not be reached for comment. Judges have authority over the inmates sent to the program as a condition of probation.

District Judges George Gallagher and Scott Wisch said they had no plans to remove their probationers.

"My probationers are OK," Gallagher said. "I feel comfortable enough to allow those probationers to finish what they've started."

Gallagher said the families of two probationers asked that their children be allowed to stay.

Wisch said he sees no immediate health or safety risks to the half-dozen probationers he has sent to the facility.

"I think it would be presumptuous to remove people simply because of this tragedy," he said. "When the program works right, it's an incredible opportunity to salvage 17-to 25-year-olds. For many, this is their last great opportunity to avoid prison."

Correctional Services Corp. has run the camp since it opened in 1992. Its contract expires Aug. 31, and county officials are expecting bids from it and other private corrections companies by Thursday.

"I'm sure this doesn't move us from the back of the line to the front of the line," Tate said.

The contract, which is awarded every three years but renewed annually, is approved by the 19 judges. The county corrections center houses four programs, including the boot camp. The camp can accommodate 120 inmates, and it provides voluntary substance-abuse programs.

Probation department officials

will review the contract bids and make a recommendation to the judges in mid-February, said James Sinclair, assistant director of the Tarrant County Community Supervision and Corrections Department.

"There is a whole host of criteria that we will look at before making a recommendation to the judge's panel," he said. "Any past performance and history with a contractor will play into that recommendation."

The boot camp has had a year of turmoil, including escapes and allegations of sexual assaults of female inmates by drill instructors.

The judges plan to meet Monday to discuss the camp. They are not expected to decide on contract bids until after the probation department makes its recommendations.

Meanwhile, the district attorney's office and the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department are conducting separate investigations into Alexander's death.

Sheriff Dee Anderson said his department is investigating whether Alexander died of natural causes.

"Right now, the medical examiner believes it is a natural death," he said. "Unless we find out otherwise, our investigation will end."

Investigators with the district attorney's office did not return phone calls Tuesday.

Alexander's family accuses boot camp officials of not providing proper medical treatment. Correctional Services Corp. officials dispute the claims.

Staff writers Tanya Eiserer and Karen Brooks contributed to this report.

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Inquiry into teen's death expands

Texas Rangers will investigate the case of a Mansfield boot camp probationer who died of pneumonia Jan. 9.

BY TANYA EISERER
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

Texas Rangers will investigate the death of a Mansfield boot camp probationer who died of pneumonia Jan. 9 at a Fort Worth hospital, officials said.

The Rangers agreed to the investigation of the death of Bryan D. Alexander after receiving a request from state District Judge James R. Wilson, who presides over a panel of 19 judges that oversees the boot camp.

"We're having the Texas Rangers come in because the public needs to know that we are fully and thoroughly investigating it," Wilson said. "There's allegations flying everywhere. We need

to disprove or prove the allegations."

The Tarrant County Sheriff's Department and the Mansfield Police Department are also investigating Alexander's death.

Alexander, 18, died at John Peter Smith Hospital two days after he was admitted.

Tony Schaffer, an Austin lawyer representing Correctional Services Corp., the Florida-based contractor that runs the program, said, "We certainly welcome the Rangers, and we will cooperate fully with them."

Since Thursday, 45 inmates have been transferred to Tarrant County Jail on the orders of several criminal court judges. Only 43 probationers remain in the six-month program at the Tarrant County Community Corrections Center.

Wilson said he removed his probationers from the facility Tuesday, in part because of the investigation. Wilson said his

action was also prompted by other incidents that he declined to discuss.

"It goes a lot deeper than the [Alexander] investigation," he said.

Randy Tate, the camp administrator, said the judges' moving of probationers to the jail has virtually dismantled the program.

"It's been very disruptive," he said.

Tela Mange, a Texas Department of Public Safety spokeswoman in Austin, said the agency received a letter from Wilson requesting help from the Rangers.

"We have agreed to do so," Mange said. "It's not unusual for us to get involved in in-custody deaths."

Mange said a Rangers captain in Garland will assign an investigator to look into the case.

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Boot Camp

The concept has problems but deserves retention.

Millions of young people have benefited from military experience, so much so that a component of such training — the "boot camp" — has been incorporated into criminal rehabilitation techniques.

A facility in Mansfield is part of the Tarrant County Community Corrections Center.

Young people on probation endure a regimen of physical activity, counseling and 24-hour supervision by military-like drill instructors. Many also complete high school equivalency certificates prior to graduation.

That's not to say that the boot camp has been without problems. In recent years, there have been escapes, allegations of female inmates being assaulted by drill instructors, staffing shortages and a change in leadership. Most recently, an 18-year-old inmate died from pneumonia,

and there have been allegations of improper care.

Indeed, some judges have pulled inmates from the facility — meaning that they're now in county jail — and a state senator has called for an investigation.

That investigation should proceed. Hard questions must be asked and answered. Accountability is crucial. In this era of modern medicine, it's difficult to comprehend the death of such a young person because of such a treatable medical problem.

But even though improvements are necessary, the boot camp process has a record of accomplishment worthy of preservation. It appears clear, for example, that some kind of additional supervisory liaison between the boot camp and Tarrant County judges is necessary — perhaps someone from the Sheriff's Department. In short, the answer is not to eliminate the boot camp but to fix its problems.

MANSFIELD

Sheriff is looking into the death of boot camp trainee

BY CHRISTY GONZALES
AND ANTHONY SPANGLER
Star-Telegram Staff Writers

MANSFIELD — The Tarrant County Sheriff's Department is looking into the case of an 18-year-old boot camp trainee who died of pneumonia this week.

But Sheriff Dee Anderson said the investigation will only determine whether a criminal offense has occurred and not whether proper medical measures were taken to tend to Bryan Alexander.

Alexander died about a day and a half after he was taken from the boot camp at the Mansfield Law Enforcement Center to John Peter Smith Hospital.

The Sheriff's Department is waiting for the autopsy and toxicology results from the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office. Once the results are complete, investigators will decide what steps to take, Anderson said.

Preliminary results from the medical examiner state that the manner of death was natural. Officials have said pneumonia caused Alexander's death.

Anderson said the Sheriff's Department will pursue charges only if it is determined that Alexander's death resulted from criminal activity.

"From what I've seen so far, there's no evidence of that," he said. "Someone dying of an illness doesn't warrant a criminal investigation."

Tarrant County Criminal Judge Billy Mills, the judge who sentenced Alexander to the facility in October, said the district attorney's office is also looking into the death.

The district attorney's office on Friday did not return telephone calls seeking comment.

In the meantime, the private company that runs the correctional facility released a statement reiterating that its staff properly cared for Alexander.

But Alexander's family members, who buried him Friday, disagreed through their attorney.

"We think he did not get care or attention the last week or 10 days of his life," said Arlington lawyer Charlie Smith. "We think there was gross negligence and withholding of medical care."

"Their biggest concern is that this type of conduct never happen to another child."

Jim Slattery, chief executive officer of Correctional Services Corp., the Florida-based private contractor that runs the camp, issued a statement to defend his company's response to Alexander's illness and sudden death.

He said the medical staff made a timely response to Alexander's written request for treatment.

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Sheriff to make changes

Anderson says he is reorganizing his staff to increase accountability and efficiency.

BY KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson announced an extensive restructuring of his executive staff Tuesday, saying the new "flatter structure" would foster accountability within the department.

Anderson, who said the current system was jumbled, eliminated an assistant chief deputy and four captains' positions, and created five chief deputy slots and one executive chief deputy position. The reorganization adds a position and will cost about \$160,000 a year with pay and benefits, Anderson said.

Two executive chief deputies will report directly to the sheriff. The five chief deputies, each overseeing two to four divisions, will report to the executive chief deputies.

Anderson declined to release the names of the chief deputies and captains whose jobs will be affected, but he said no one will be fired.

Under the old system, several captains reported to a vertical line of chief deputies who eventually reported to the sheriff.

"They had so much command responsibility that they were not in touch with the people in their division," Anderson said.

The new executive chief deputy will be in charge of confinement and will not only oversee issues within the jails, but

(More on SHERIFF on Page 16B)

will also be in charge of space needs, construction and personnel, Anderson said.

"That person will have more of a global-outlook responsibility for confinement," he said.

Savala Swanson, chief deputy of confinement who would report directly to the new chief executive deputy, said it's too soon to tell how well it would work.

"I don't know what he has in mind, but I'm pretty sure it's going to be to the benefit of the jails," he said.

The first assignment of the

chief deputies will be to review their departments for inefficiency, he said.

Among the positions eliminated are those formerly held by Capt. John Dalton and Dave Barrington, and Assistant Chief Deputy Larry Hester. Anderson demoted the three two weeks ago after learning that former Sheriff David Williams had filed an 11th-hour request to reclassify their jobs to protect them under civil service rules.

Anderson said at the time that he was forced to demote them because their positions, which had never been advertised or open to the public, were not valid under civil service rules.

Barrington was demoted to deputy, Hester and Dalton to their previous civil-service duties as lieutenants.

Anderson also said new people will take over some of the top appointments, but declined to



Anderson

name them. The candidates had not informed their employers that they had applied for jobs with Anderson, he said.

"No one new has been offered a job yet," Anderson said.

The reorganization depends on the final approval of the county's job evaluation committee, which is expected to discuss the issue next week. County commissioners unanimously approved the move Tuesday, a necessary vote because it involves adjusting the sheriff's budget.

"First big step in the right direction," Commissioner J.D. Johnson said.

Executive Chief Deputy Hank Pope, who declined to say whether he would be moved into one of the new positions, called the new arrangement "new and improved."

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2001 ★

Speaking of parties, former Tarrant County Sheriff's Department Cmdr. **Jim Minter** said he wanted to host a huge January bash to celebrate the end of Sheriff **David Williams'** era.

Minter, who once served as acting sheriff, was fired by Williams along with other sheriff's commanders after Williams took office in 1993. Minter ran against Williams in 1996 and has since become an attorney and represented some sheriff's employees in legal actions against Williams.

"I wanted to rent Round Up Inn but it was already booked," Minter said, referring to the facility in Fort Worth's Will Rogers complex. "I needed some place big because I figured 1,000 people would show up."

This week's contributors: **MAX B. BAKER,**
JAY ROOT, R.A. DYER and **BOB MAHLBURG.**

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2001

Clearing the air

It appears that commentators (and I use the word in its broadest sense) Mark Davis and Bill Thompson will have to find a new "whipping boy" now that the bad whiff of Bill Clinton's scandal is out of the White House.

And while we are clearing the air, wouldn't it be equally refreshing if we could just find a way to get the stench generated by the opinions expressed by these two individuals out of the *Star-Telegram* and back to the outhouse, where their columns might find space to be better appreciated?

Floyd F. Clark
Fort Worth

Jailed inmates may get classes in job, life skills

By KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Saying they don't want to just "warehouse" prisoners, Tarrant County Sheriff's officials and a community agency are developing a program aimed at teaching inmates serving time for minor crimes the skills needed to succeed in society and on the job.

The newest part of a fledgling program called the Tarrant County Fatherhood Initiative, the jail program is to begin with a pilot group of 15 inmate fathers, said Debby Kratky, client systems manager for the county's Work Advantage Board, which oversees state and federal jobs program monies.

Fathers are the first target group, Kratky said, because they have children to take care of when they are released.

(More on INMATES on Page 7B)

"It's our goal to get to those dads while they are in jail and teach them prevocational skills such as communication, anger management, conflict resolution," Kratky said.

Eventually, plans call for the program to include misdemeanor offenders throughout the jail, including women, officials said.

The curriculum, which has not been developed, is to include resume-building and interview skills.

Parenting classes and sessions on spousal abuse might be added later, officials said.

Because misdemeanor offenders stay in the Tarrant County Jail system an average of 90 days, the program is to be carried out in sessions that are four to six weeks long.

About one-third of the jail's average population of 3,100 are incarcerated for misdemeanors.

The program is expected to be implemented within 60 days, said Savala Swanson, the Sheriff's Department chief deputy for confinement.

Sheriff's officials say the program could offset some of the difficulties linked to probation, reduce the chances of recidivism and keep up with recent trends in

rehabilitation over punishment.

"Instead of warehousing them, we're turning them into productive individuals," Swanson said.

The idea has the support of Sheriff Dee Anderson, who says residents of any town would want criminals to have a way to turn their lives around, and that only a tiny percentage of inmates ever die behind bars or on Death Row.

"The rest return to society to live among law-abiding citizens," Anderson said.

No cost has been attached to the program. Because it is a pilot effort, no funding is available. Organizers hope to determine costs as it gets going, Kratky said.

The Tarrant County Fatherhood Initiative is a countywide program that is being planned to target teen fathers, those who are about to lose contact with their children and fathers who are in trouble with the Attorney General's office, including those who are delinquent on child-support payments.

The jail portion was created when Sheriff's officials entered the equation about three weeks ago, Kratky said, showing their support and expressing the need for inmate support programs.

Right now, the jail offers classes toward a general equivalency diploma and in English as a Second Language, Swanson said.

Once the curriculum is worked out, Work Advantage officials plan to present the final program proposal to Anderson, and then, with

"It's our goal to get to those dads while they are in jail and teach them prevocational skills such as communication, anger management, conflict resolution."

— Debby Kratky
Work Advantage Board

his approval, to Commissioners Court.

Commissioner J.D. Johnson, the court's jail liaison, said he has not been briefed on the program and that he'd "wait and see what it's all about before I comment." Teaching inmates job skills couldn't hurt their chances of being productive citizens, Johnson said.

The fight over rehabilitation vs. punishment in the last two decades — fueled in part by complaints over the difficulty that paroled prisoners have in finding jobs — has pushed state prison officials to offer more job- and life-skills training for inmates.

That push has trickled down into county jails, where prisoners don't stay as long but have many of the same needs, said Terry Julian, executive director of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards in Austin.

A local defense attorney welcomed plans for such a program but cautioned against its becoming another way of punishing inmates. Fort Worth attorney Jim Shaw encouraged extending the program to nonviolent felons as well, such as those convicted in drug cases.

"Any program like that would be long overdue if it's run by people that are there to help them and not demean them," said Shaw, who has many clients who would be eligible for the program.

Among the Texas county jails that are well known for their rehabilitation efforts is the one in Bexar County, which has offered myriad programs for inmates over the past decade and GED classes for more than 20 years.

Bexar also offers courses in anger management and parenting skills. Officials there say that, although they don't have any numbers to prove that recidivism has declined, the anecdotal evidence is there.

"We've had people that, after being in the criminal underworld, come to jail and get involved with our programs," said Capt. Dan Gabehart, executive officer of Bexar County's detention division. "Then, later, we find out these guys are now employed in some kind of outreach programs that relates to what they were doing in the jail. That's the highest compliment we can get."

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Sheriff's commissary funds returned to county treasury

BY DEANNA BOYD
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County commissioners agreed Tuesday to return the sheriff's commissary funds to the county treasury.

Sheriff Dee Anderson, who made the recommendation, said keeping the funds, currently \$93,150.88, in a separate account "has created numerous problems with our purchases."

The money comes from \$2 the commissary operator pays to the county for each inmate and is based on the average monthly jail census.

The funds, which must be used to benefit inmates, were a point of contention between former Sheriff David Williams and commissioners. In June 1995, the district attorney's office ruled that Williams could have the funds, but county officials said the sheriff never requested the account in writing.

In November 1998, Williams sued commissioners over the budget

and the commissary fund, but the lawsuit was later dropped.

In March 1999, Williams asked in writing that the county auditor turn the account over to his department. The commissary account then had a balance of about \$354,000, which was placed in a bank account under Williams' control. Williams later paid more than \$300,000 to former jail chaplain Hugh Atwell and his ministry to care for the spiritual needs of prisoners.

Last summer, the county filed suit to stop a one-year contract that Williams signed with Aramark Corp. Correctional Services to operate the jail commissary. Profits would partially benefit Atwell's jail ministry. That suit remains in the courts.

County Judge Tom Vandergriff has said he plans to push for changes in state law to give local government leaders — not just the sheriff — control of commissaries.

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Two Arlington officers to join sheriff's command staff

ARLINGTON — Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson confirmed Tuesday that he has hired two Arlington police officers to fill top command-staff posts.

Sgt. Mike Simonds and officer Jeff Nicholson will start March 5 in newly created chief deputy positions.

"It's important that I have people in the top command positions that I know and trust," Anderson said. "These are people that are proven to me. These are not only co-workers and people I respect, but they are 20-plus-year friends."

Anderson, who was a longtime Arlington police officer, was elected sheriff in November and assumed command of the 1,240-member Sheriff's Department Jan. 1.

Simonds and Nicholson submitted their letters of intent to retire Monday and Tuesday, respectively.

Simonds will oversee the criminal investigations division.

"With the command staff that is assembling over there, I think it's a good opportunity to do something different," said Simonds, a supervisor in Arlington's homicide unit.

Nicholson will supervise the technology and records divisions.

Pilot Program

Jails and prisons need to be more than warehouses for convicts.

The term "correctional facilities" is used often in this country as a synonym for jails and prisons, yet it is obvious that there is very little correction taking place inside of Texas' penal institutions.

Yes, there are a few — too few — educational, drug rehabilitation and behavioral modification programs in the state's growing penitentiary system, but basically nothing of the kind exists in most county jails.

A pilot program being discussed for inmates at the Tarrant County Jail, where one-third of the prisoners are charged with misdemeanors, will be an important step toward bringing real corrections to people behind bars.

The Tarrant County Fatherhood Initiative, a program that the county's Work Advantage has created, is developing a curriculum to teach inmate fathers prevo-

catational skills, including communication, anger management, conflict resolution, resume building and interview techniques.

Sheriff's officials believe that this effort would reduce recidivism by equipping the men with tools that will help them live up to the terms of their parole. Finding and keeping a job are two of the most important provisions of community supervision.

If there is success in the pilot program, misdemeanor offenders (male and female) throughout the jail would be included in an expansion of the project.

As Sheriff Dee Anderson and his top staff have recognized, we must do more than simply warehouse prisoners — we must somehow figure out a way that helps them return to society in a productive way.

Most prisoners will not remain in jail forever. They will return to the community. It is in the best interest of all that they come back with the ability and the mindset to contribute to it, rather than merely take from it.

OBITUARIES

Elsie Baker Diebler



FORT WORTH — Elsie Baker Diebler, 77, a retired deputy sheriff of Tarrant County, died Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2001, in Fort Worth.

Funeral: 1:30 p.m. Friday at Greenwood Chapel. Burial: Greenwood Memorial Park.

Memorials: If desired, the family requests memorials be directed to Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, Box 6217, Tyler 75711.

Pallbearers: Tarrant County Sheriff's Dept. Honor Guard.

Elsie Baker Diebler was born May 6, 1923, in Shawnee, Okla., to the James Pickens Tedford and Lillian Simpson Tedford; they preceded her in death. She was a native of Hartselle, Ala. She was a 1942 graduate of Decatur High School in Decatur, Ala. Mrs. Diebler was one of the first female deputies to be licensed in the State of Texas. She was a member of the Texas Sheriff Association, Mary Tyler Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Daughters of 1812 and St. Luke's United Methodist Church of Fort Worth.

Elsie was preceded in death by her brothers, Oscar Tedford of Hartselle, Ala., and Judge Tedford of Ypsilanti, Mich.; and sisters, Jamie Nicoloff of Fort Worth and Dorothy Wright of Lansing, Mich.

Survivors: Loving husband, Melvin H. Diebler of Fort Worth; daughter, Janet Burks and husband, Larry, of Tyler; son, Calvin Baker of Fort Worth; grandchildren, Jody Marie Burks and Jason Joe Burks both of Tyler; sisters, Betty Blevins of Keller and Jean Lambert of Fort Worth; brother, Max Tedford of Ann Arbor, Mich.; several nieces and nephews; other family members; and a host of friends.

Greenwood Funeral Home
3100 White Settlement Road, (817) 336-0584

Two demoted deputies gain \$250,000 each

BY TONI HEINZL
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A federal jury awarded \$250,000 each to two Tarrant County sheriff's deputies Thursday, finding that former Sheriff David Williams demoted the veteran lawmen to entry-level assignments for supporting his opponent in the 1996 elections.

The verdicts against Tarrant County were \$50,000 higher than Glen Allison and Steve Henry had sought in damages for mental anguish, embarrassment and humiliation.

After a three-day trial, the jurors determined that Williams was responsible for the job transfers, that the transfers were politically motivated and that they

tion.

Allison, 55, and Henry, 47, are longtime friends and had been partners for years, serving felony and misdemeanor warrants, when they were sent to what they described as the Sheriff's Department equivalent of Siberia.

They were transferred a few days after the 1996 general elections.

Henry was transferred to "judicial service" — operating the metal detector and X-ray machine at the courthouse.

"Sheriff Williams put me out on display for humiliation," Henry said.

The assignment led to daily encounters with police officers, attorneys and others who passed by and asked why he had been reassigned, he said.

Allison was reassigned to the jail release desk — a position he says exposed him to the stench of rodent droppings, to roaches, and to tuberculosis and other communicable diseases carried by jail inmates.

"The confinement personnel must be tested once a year for tuberculosis exposure," Allison said.

Jail jobs are entry-level assignments, Allison said. He had 29 years of experience in law enforcement when he was transferred.

Allison thanked the jurors "from the bot-

harmed the deputies' employment.

"This jury has protected the right to support the candidate of one's choice for every one of this county, Republican or Democrat," said attorney Jason Smith, who represented the deputies with attorney Art Brender, chairman of the Tarrant County Democratic Party.

Ann Diamond, chief of litigation for the Tarrant County district attorney's office, said the county will review the verdict before deciding whether to appeal.

"Tarrant County's position is that there wasn't any wrongful act committed by the county," Diamond said. "The transfer was a management decision. It wasn't politically motivated."

Williams did not return telephone calls to his home.

Allison and Henry supported Bill McClendon, the Democrat who lost to Williams in the 1996 general election. Allison ran for sheriff in the primary but lost to McClendon and then supported him in the general elec-

tom of our hearts for seeing through all this."

He said, "It has been our contention all along that our First Amendment rights were violated."

Williams and Chief Deputy Hank Pope testified and denied any wrongdoing. Williams testified Tuesday that he was aware of a political advertisement showing that Allison and Henry supported his opponent.

Pope testified that the transfers were a management decisions that were made five months before the elections. It was coincidence that the transfers were made 10 days after the election, Pope testified.

Since the jury could award only damages, Smith said, he will ask U.S. District Judge Terry Means to order that the department reinstate Allison and Henry in their previous jobs.

Williams' successor, Sheriff Dee Anderson, said he will review the verdict with the district attorney's office and take another look at job transfers made under the previous administration.

"We'll take a look at the verdict and see what we can learn from it," Anderson said.

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the INSIDER report

Was there a sign in this week's federal court verdict ordering Tarrant County to pay \$250,000 each to two sheriff's employees who were demoted by former Sheriff

David Williams for not supporting his re-election?

Maybe that has something to do with the dozens of job vacancies that the Sheriff's Department has had in recent years. Last week, new Sheriff **Dee Anderson** reported that hiring is improving and that the number of vacant jobs has dropped below 50 for the first time in two years.

"We're encouraged," Anderson said. "I think we're seeing a bit of a turnaround. We have a long way to go."

This week's contributors: JAY ROOT and BOB MAHLBURG.

Wednesday, February 21, 2001

Five new Tarrant County Sheriff's Department appointees



Mike Johnston

POSITION: Executive Chief Deputy of Operations

FORMERLY: Security manager at Medical Center of Arlington. Former commander of investigative, uniform and administrative services divisions in Arlington Police Department.



Bob Knowles

POSITION: Executive Chief Deputy of Confinement

FORMERLY: Jail administrator for Dallas County Sheriff's Department, where he worked in detention, warrants, identification and civil divisions for 26 years.



Mike Simonds

POSITION: Chief Deputy of Investigations and Warrants

FORMERLY: Homicide supervisor at the Arlington Police Department, where he worked as a patrol officer, a narcotics detective and an investigator.



Jeff Nicholson

POSITION: Chief Deputy of Information Technology and Central Records

FORMERLY: Information systems specialist at Arlington Police Department, assigned to the research and development unit.



Jim Willett

POSITION: Chief Deputy of Personnel, Training, Recruitment and Community Relations

FORMERLY: Assigning manager of the Fort Worth bureau at KDFW/Channel 4; then assignment editor at WFAA/Channel 8. Previously at Arlington Police Department for 13 years, where he spent the last three as spokesman.

Sheriff appoints five to top positions

**Official notes absence
of minorities, women**

By KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Three Arlington police officials, the Dallas County jail chief and a local newsmen are among Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson's new top brass.

Anderson, a spokesman for the Arlington Police Department until his November election, introduced the men Tuesday to commissioners and command staff.

Anderson told commissioners he didn't "think we could have dreamed to have a more qualified group of individuals" running the department.

"We're proud to be here and ready to work," Anderson said. The positions are exempt from civil-service rules.

The appointees Anderson announced Tuesday are all white and male, which drew fire from Commissioner Dionne Bagsby — the only African-American and one of two women on the court.

There are no women and only one African-American occupying the department's top 10 positions, which includes Anderson, the executive administrator, two chief deputies and six chief deputies.

"It is an impressive team of people he was already familiar with and was comfortable with. I don't think there was probably any thought given to diversity," Bagsby said. "I'm not being criti-

(More on SHERIFF on Page 10B)

SHERIFF

From Page 1B

cal. I have pointed this out to him and told him that I hoped in the future that the issue of diversity was one that would be considered."

Anderson said he was "mindful" of the lack of diversity on his staff, and said race or gender did not play a role in his appointments. There is still one more exempt chief deputy position to fill, he said.

"Obviously, we're going to work toward that [diversity]," Anderson said.

Since late January, Anderson has appointed seven men to top positions after a realignment of the command structure he said would make the department run more efficiently. Six chief deputies will report to two executive chief deputies, who will report to Anderson.

Two chief deputies were hired from within the department — Hank Pope and Savala Swanson — and the third, over patrol, will probably be an inside hire, Anderson said.

Mike Johnston and Bob Knowles were hired as executive chief deputies. Johnston has supervised every area of the Arlington Police Department over 25 years, and Knowles recently retired as Dallas County's jail administrator after "26 years, five months and five days."

Knowles will be over confinement and Johnston over operations, which includes everything not related to the jail.

In 1997, Knowles supported an employees movement at the Dallas County jail calling for better pay. He said Tuesday that salaries were one of the reasons he chose to work in Tarrant County. County officials gave jailers a raise last year.

Johnston, who has taught for 18 years in the criminal justice depart-

ment of the University of Texas at Arlington, told captains and commanders Tuesday that he appreciated their strength during years of public discord between commissioners and former Sheriff David Williams.

"You've gone on in spite of all the controversy," he said.

Mike Simonds, a former supervisor in Arlington's homicide unit and a 21-year veteran of the department, will oversee investigations and warrants — the busiest and, by Anderson's account, most successful division.

Jeff Nicholson was a member of the Arlington Police Department for 22 years, most recently as an information systems specialist assigned

to the research and development unit. Nicholson will oversee the department's information technology and central records departments.

Jim Willett was an Arlington officer for 10 years and spokesman for three. Eleven years ago, he passed the baton to Anderson and became a local TV news editor, first for KDFW/Channel 4 then at WFAA/Channel 8. He is the chief deputy of personnel, training, recruitment and community relations.

Pope will run judiciary services, which include building security and court bailiffs; Swanson will continue overseeing jails.

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Denton County

UNT policeman accused of misuse of information

DENTON — A University of North Texas policeman has been accused of accessing private university information to apply for credit cards using other people's names, then charging purchases with the cards, UNT police said.

A Denton County grand jury this month indicted Jimmy Ray Porter, 29, of Fort Worth on three counts of misuse of official information. Porter worked for the UNT police from November 1998 until his dismissal in December.

A prosecutor in the Denton County district attorney's office said Tuesday that Porter used Police Department software to illegally obtain personal information about two university employees and one student.

Authorities were investigating the amount charged on the credit cards, prosecutors said Tuesday.

Porter could not be reached to comment.

He is a former confinement officer for Tarrant County Sheriff's Department, sheriff's Lt. Mack West said.

Though indicted in Denton County, Porter turned himself in Saturday at Tarrant County Sheriff's Department and posted bail of \$1,500 on each count before being released, West said.

Department Diversity

Tarrant County's sheriff needs to prove his commitment.

The election of Dee Anderson as sheriff of Tarrant County brought new strength, vision and hope to a department that had been poorly administered for the past eight years.

There is no doubt that the management of the Sheriff's Department — and the Tarrant County jails in particular — will be much more professional under Anderson. But his appointment this week of five top administrators who were all white males caused some to question his commitment to diversity.

Anderson, saying that he was "mindful" of the lack of diversity on his staff, defended his actions by pointing out that all the men are very qualified for the jobs.

Without casting aspersions on any of the appointees, it is disappointing to think that the sheriff has been unable to select a

management team that is more reflective of the county he was elected to serve.

There is one African-American, an employee of the previous administration, who is a deputy chief in the department, but surely he is not the only qualified minority capable of holding a high-ranking position in the department.

Executives of any enterprise, whether public or private, have the right to surround themselves with competent people they trust. But nowadays, and especially in institutions that have had a history of discrimination and indifference based on race and ethnicity, it is incumbent upon leaders to demonstrate commitment to an inclusive work force.

Anderson, a former spokesman for the Arlington Police Department, was elected partly because he was considered a good communicator. But leaders demonstrate their commitment to diversity by actions, not words.

Bush friend taken from Tarrant jail

The sheriff says agents who said they were with Jenna Bush picked up a student Sunday.

By JACK DOUGLAS JR.
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Secret Service agents who said they were escorting one of President Bush's daughters picked up a TCU student early Sunday from the county jail after his arrest for public intoxication, Sheriff Dee Anderson said Wednesday.

Anderson said William Ashe Bridges, 18, was polite and courteous, but also "very intoxicated" and "very vocal" in saying that he was Jenna Bush's boyfriend.

He was placed in a cell alone, to ensure his safety, for about four hours, then allowed to make a call from his cellular telephone, the sheriff said.

Anderson said jail officials believe that he called for Jenna Bush and her Secret Service escort.

"A few minutes later, a black Suburban and some Secret Service agents showed up," Anderson said, adding that jail personnel were told Jenna Bush was in the Suburban.

Bridges, a TCU freshman, entered the

vehicle and "they were on their way," the sheriff said.

When contacted Wednesday night by phone, Bridges said, at first, that "it wasn't really a big deal." He refused to discuss the events further. "I guess I really don't want to say anything," he said.

The White House also declined to discuss Jenna Bush's friendship with Bridges, or whether she was at a weekend party near Texas Christian University that was halted by police and Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission officers. Claire Buchan, a White House spokeswoman, said: "We are not going to have a comment."

Officers arrived at the private residence in the 2700 block of Sandage Avenue shortly after midnight on Sunday after receiving complaints of loud music and beer bottles in the yard and the street, TABC Sgt. Robert Cloud said.

Cloud said he arrived at the scene and was told of reports that "Jenna Bush was there and the



Jenna Bush

Secret Service was up the road." He said he didn't see the agents or Bush.

Once Bridges was placed in custody, Cloud said, "he asked initially if Jenna was all right. He told me they had gone to high school together in Austin and were friends."

A young woman was also arrested at the party, because her driver's license was thought to be fake, and a young man — believed to be one of the party's hosts — was taken into custody on a charge of providing alcohol to minors, Cloud said.

Jenna Bush, 19, a freshman at the University of Texas at Austin, could not be reached to comment.

Bridges' father, Austin surgeon Robert Bridges, said that his son and Bush were "just friends," and that he was not aware of any "boyfriend-girlfriend kind of relationship." They have known each other since both began high school in Austin, the elder Bridges said.

Robert Bridges said he was not aware of his son's arrest. "We're disappointed," he said.

A charge of public intoxication is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a maximum fine of \$500. While it is handled as a written citation, offenders, if considered a risk to themselves or others, are often taken to jail to sober up, Cloud said.

Anderson said jail staff members notified him that they might have a close friend of the presi-

dent's daughter in custody. "My instructions to them was to treat him just like any other prisoner, [and] be sure to keep him safe," the sheriff said.

Jailers were, at first, skeptical when Bridges described himself as Bush's boyfriend, Anderson said. They changed their minds, however, once the prisoner made his call and the black Suburban pulled up. "I think they became fairly convinced fairly quickly that they [the agents] were the real people when they showed up," Anderson said.

He said Bridges was kept in the jail for four hours, which he called plenty of time for the teen-ager to sober up. According to an offense report, Bridges was officially "booked in at 2:58 a.m. Sunday and released just less than three hours later, at 5:46 a.m. In an interview in December 1999, early in the presidential campaign, George W. Bush acknowledged concerns about the privacy of his twin daughters Jenna and Barbara. Barbara Bush is a freshman at Yale University.

"One of my great hesitations about making this race is I really don't want their lives to be affected by me, and I know it's going to be," Bush said then. "It is something that troubles me because I love them and I can understand," he said.

Knight Ridder correspondent Ron Hutcheson contributed to this report.

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Jenna Bush asked about bail for friend, sheriff says

FORT WORTH — President Bush's daughter Jenna spoke with a sergeant and inquired about bail for a friend who had been booked into the Tarrant County Jail early Sunday after a police raid on a TCU-area fraternity party, officials said Thursday.

Jenna Bush, 19, and her Secret Service escorts picked up William Ashe Bridges, 18, at the jail four hours later, said Sheriff Dee Anderson, who interviewed jail personnel on duty Thursday, the morning after the episode was made public.

Bridges, cited for two alcohol-related misdemeanors, was booked into the jail about 1:45 a.m., although the data wasn't entered into the computer for about an hour. Once in, he said he needed to get a phone number stored on his cellular phone, because it "wasn't in any phone book," Anderson said.

Bridges called the number and then, after a brief conversation, handed the phone to a sergeant. The woman on the other end of the line "said her name was Jenna Bush," Anderson said.

Bush asked to be called when her friend could be released, Anderson said. "I think there was also a question about whether there was a need for bond money," he said. As is customary in Class C misdemeanor cases, no bail was required, he said.

Bridges, a Texas Christian University freshman, was arrested at about 1 a.m. after Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission officers raided a fraternity party. Two other people were also arrested.

Fort Worth police officers who went to the home before the raid because of complaints of loud music spotted two men sitting nearby in a black Suburban and asked who they were, said Lt. Duane Paul, spokesman with the Fort Worth Police Department. They identified themselves as Secret Service agents.

■ LETTERS, FAXES AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR

Snake pit

I have found hell on earth, and it is here in Tarrant County. I recently had reason to be a visitor to two Tarrant County correctional facilities; believe me, I came away with my eyes wide open to what is really going on in those places.

I used to be one of those folks who naively believed that jail residents were given "three squares" and a warm, dry place to sleep. I did not expect a country club, but I certainly did not expect what I did see at the Green Bay facility.

Most people would not house the meanest junk-yard dog in a hole such as this. And that is just how those men are treated.

Imagine that your neighbor keeps his guard pit bull chained night and day in all sorts of weather. He has a cement slab to sleep on and a tin roof over it. He is out there in the sleet of winter or the sweltering heat of summer.

About once or twice a day, the owner throws him a stale piece of bread and a piece of bologna of questionable age. He drinks water from a dirty bowl.

Just for fun, the owner will come out and poke a stick at the chained animal. He will yell at him, belittle him and even strike him when he thinks you aren't

looking.

I would report such behavior to the ASPCA or Humane Society. How do I do that for the residents of Green Bay? Where do I go? With whom do I speak?

The deplorable conditions under which these men must live must be changed. I know that convicted criminals deserve to be punished. But I also know that they are human beings, and that as such they deserve food that is fit to eat, a clean bed with adequate bedding to fit the temperature, and the opportunity to actually see daylight and occasionally feel fresh air.

They do not deserve living in constant fear that the next word they speak might get their visiting rights taken away. They do not deserve having their friends and family treated like criminals when they visit.

Kay Newberry
Burlison

Commission rules against former sheriff's officials

By **KAREN BROOKS**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Three Tarrant County Sheriff's Department administrative supervisors who lost their positions under newly elected Sheriff Dee Anderson cannot appeal his decision, the Sheriff's Civil Service Commission ruled Monday.

John Dalton, Dave Barrington and Larry Hester cannot ask for civil service protection for jobs they held as exempt employees, said commission Chairman John P. White Jr., who was appointed last week by Anderson.

The three were removed from civil service exemption by former Sheriff David Williams during his last days in office in December.

The ruling closes the door on any administrative remedy for what the three men termed political retaliation by Anderson.

Their next recourse is in District Court. None of the men said he had any made specific plans for an appeal.

"I'm really surprised and disappointed that the civil service commission has decided not to hear the case and represent the employees so that the details of our case can be heard," Hester said.

Exemption means that an official can appoint anyone to a position, and that the person can later be fired by the next official to hold the office, according to civil service rules.

If a position is protected, a job

candidate must follow civil service rules to get it. But in order to fire such a person, the elected official must prove it is not a political action.

White said Williams apparently intended to protect supporters Dalton, Hester and Barrington from losing their high positions under Anderson, who took office Jan. 1.

But Anderson argued that the three had not attained their assistant chief deputy positions under civil service rules, so he had to return them to the positions they held before Williams named them exempt supervisors.

Dalton, a former captain, and Hester, an assistant chief deputy, are now lieutenants. Barrington was returned to his former deputy position.

The hearing was the first before White, an Arlington attorney appointed to replace former chairman Richard De Otte, who stepped down last month.

De Otte, who was appointed by Williams in April 1999 and said he is still good friends with the former sheriff, said he vacated his post because Anderson should be able to name someone he knows and trusts, considering some of the politically charged cases that the commission decides.

"That was a judgment I made to give the new sheriff some breathing room," De Otte said.

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TIN STAR



Star-Telegram/RON T. ENNIS

Sheriff Dee Anderson holds a counterfeit Tarrant County badge bought over the Internet, at left, and a real one.

A police badge — real or fake — can provide good cover for a criminal. And it's not all that hard to get one.

BY DEANNA BOYD
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

It is a simple metal object, often in the shape of a star or shield. But the mere flash of it can give instant credibility to the person holding it.

Collectors need only stop at a flea market or gun show or use a computer to purchase real or realistic law enforcement badges.

Unfortunately, the same is true for criminals.

Serial killer Ted Bundy displayed a badge to lure victims. So did Kenneth Bianchi and Angelo Buono, both known as the Hillside Strangler. More recently, one of the seven Texas prison escapees flashed a silver security-type badge in Colorado to order bulletproof vests.

"That's what the issue is all about — trust," Tarrant County Sheriff Dee

(More on BADGES on Page 12A)

Anderson said. "When people see a badge, they automatically trust the person who's carrying it."

With easy access comes the risk of abuse, law enforcement officials say. And despite a recent federal ban on trafficking in counterfeit or genuine police badges, the *Star-Telegram* found some Internet sites that sell badges without verifying that the purchaser is a commissioned officer.

"You've got people that are just in the business to make a profit," Anderson said. "Illegitimate companies should consider the damage and danger that could happen with these."

When a *Star-Telegram* reporter recently ordered a seven-point badge from EPoliceSupply.com with the words "Tarrant County Sheriff's Department Deputy" engraved on it, nowhere on the form did it ask whether the purchaser was a law enforcement officer.

A week later, the company sent an e-mail saying a copy of the purchaser's law enforcement credentials was needed before the badge could be shipped. The company also later updated its Web site with the requirement.

The verification was never sent, yet the badge arrived a couple of weeks later.

Alan Dennis, chief financial officer of EPoliceSupply.com, said shipping the badge was "a mistake."

"I was very mad, but it was too late to stop it," Dennis said.

It took a few days for the arrival of a Texas Department of Public Safety trooper badge ordered over the Internet from NIC Law Enforcement Supply, based in Shreveport, La.

NIC company owner Alan Tooraen said he has not been involved in the firm's daily operations for the past five years but that company policy requires a letter on a department's letterhead before a law enforcement badge is

shipped.

Tooraen said his company received the Texas trooper badges from a California manufacturing company that described it as a "facsimile of a badge that was no longer used."

DPS officials, however, say the badge appears to be an exact replica of its wallet badge. The badge is also a duplicate of the one troopers wore until September, when a slight alteration was made: A punched out star was added under the word "Texas," officials said.

Anderson said the case with...

Anderson said the ease with which a reporter ordered the badges was "disturbing but not surprising."

"I think in a perfect world you would not have police badges floating around to anyone but police officers, but that's not realistic," Anderson said. "For years, we've known there's easy access to all kinds of badges."

In Fort Worth and Bedford, officers must get approval from their department chiefs to purchase additional badges not provided by the department. Arlington officers must get approval from a designated department official.

In Bedford and Arlington, officers who quit or retire are required to return badges provided by the department, officials said. Fort Worth officers who quit must return all badges and are compensated by the city for those they had purchased, Capt. R.M. Manning said.

"If you retire, you can make a written request to the chief to keep one as a memento," Manning said.

In 1984, nine people, mostly women, were assaulted and two were raped by at least two men posing as Fort Worth police officers.

The men typically used fake badges and red lights in the grille or dashboard of their cars to stop women in isolated sections of Tarrant County.

Today, police say, criminals most often use badges in home invasions and scams.

In June, a man flashing a badge and posing as Police Chief Ralph Mendoza bilked a senior citizen out of \$30,000 by telling the victim to withdraw the mon-

FAKE BADGES AND THE LAW

■ In Texas, it is a Class B misdemeanor to knowingly provide or possess an item bearing the insignia of a law enforcement agency that identifies an unauthorized person as a commissioned peace officer or reservist. False identification as peace officer/misrepresentation of property is punishable by six months in jail and up to a \$2,000 fine. An exception allows such items to be used for decorative purposes or in an artistic presentation.

■ Impersonating an officer is third-degree felony punishable by two to 10 years in prison and a fine up to \$10,000.

ey to help catch a dishonest bank employee, police said.

Providing or possessing a badge or other item with an insignia that falsely identifies a person as a member of a law enforcement agency is a misdemeanor. Impersonating a police officer is a third-degree felony.

David Montague, a Tarrant County assistant district attorney, said people are rarely prosecuted for either offense. In 2000, only one case of false identification as peace officer was filed in Tarrant County. Court records show the case was later dismissed.

Two cases were filed for impersonating an officer, Montague said. In one, the charge was upgraded to theft. In the other, the suspect failed to appear in court and a warrant was issued for his arrest, records show.

When arrests are made, prosecutors usually seek more serious charges.

The Texas Department of Public Safety does not keep statistics on how many arrests are made statewide for either offense.

U.S. Rep. Stephen Horn, R-Calif., author of the Enhanced Federal Security Act of 2000, said his goal was to stiffen the punishment for illegally possessing or providing a law enforcement badge.

Signed into law in December, the statute bans trafficking of counterfeit or genuine badges by anyone not authorized to possess one and makes it a federal offense to use a phony police badge.

"The only exclusion we made is exempting collectors," Horn said. "If they have their little badge on the wall of a museum or their den, this isn't a problem. Just don't go out and use it."

But such an exception offers businesses or people selling or providing badges an automatic out, critics say.

"I can't imagine where it would be effective because everyone's defense to prosecution is going to be it's a memento or for decorative purposes," Anderson said. "As long as there's that big of a loophole in the law, we're going to have a tremendously hard time trying to enforce it."

Susan Brenner, associate dean and professor at the University of Dayton School of Law, said she believes the

new law will be ineffective in punishing companies that provide such badges.

"We're trying to make it a crime to facilitate someone impersonating an officer. That may be really hard to do," Brenner said. "Unless Jack the Ripper calls up giggling and says, 'Send me a badge so that I can impersonate an officer and create havoc,' how can they know? How can they possibly know?"

Horn and a spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney's office said they knew of no charges filed under the law.

Few companies interviewed by the *Star-Telegram* were aware of the federal law, but most said their companies make efforts to sell badges only to law enforcement officers.

Peg Brien of the Roberts Co. said her firm requires purchasers to provide a copy of their law enforcement letterhead and a photo ID.

"We do this because we don't want them in the wrong hands," Brien said. "I think that's the way it should be — standard operation procedure. But there's a lot of people hungry for money — no matter what."

In more than 15 years with the Massachusetts-based company, Brien said, she can recall only once when the company was contacted by the FBI about a badge being sold to a civilian who apparently used it in a crime.

"At the time, we didn't know it because he did send in a picture ID," Brien said. "At least he said it was his picture. Of course, we have no way of knowing if it was him or not."

Horn said he has no plans to try to strengthen the wording of the law or bring questions of intent into the statute.

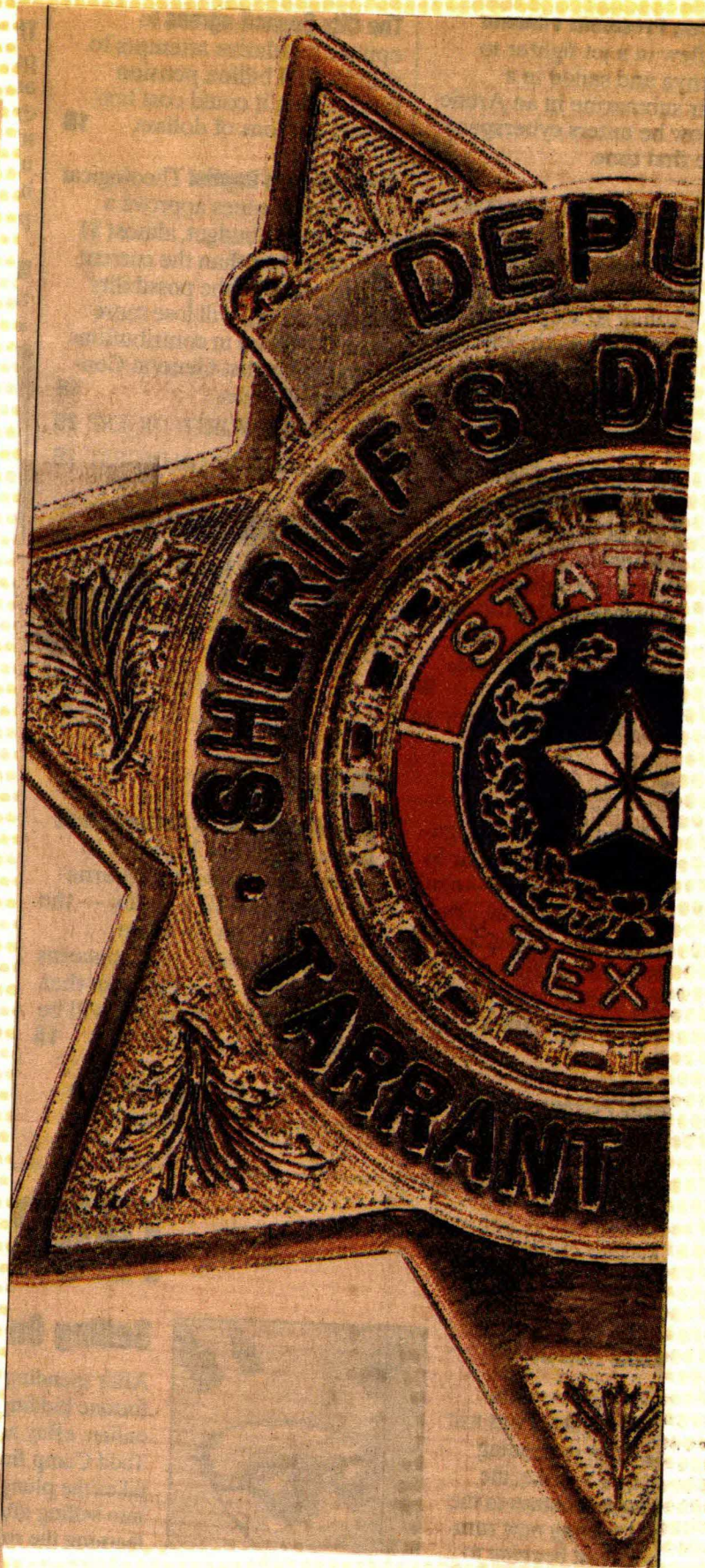
"I'll leave it up to the U.S. attorney as to what they see in the law and what they could do with it," Horn said.

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For today's Star-Telegram and more news and features, go to www.star-telegram.com

To search the Metroplex, go to www.dfw.com



WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU

A badge isn't the only way a criminal can gain your trust. Clothing such as T-shirts, hats and jackets with the words *police*, *sheriff* and *SWAT* can be purchased just as easily.

If you are not sure the person at your door is a law officer, here are some precautions:

- Almost all departments require officers to carry department or state photo identification cards. Ask to see it.
- If still in doubt after seeing a photo ID, call the department and ask for further verification.
- A motorist, especially a woman alone at night, should seek a well-lighted and populated area before pulling over. Most police departments allow only uniformed officers driving marked cars to stop motorists.



TARRANT COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

FAKE



Inner circle of state seal is dark blue; outer circle is red.
Height: 2 1/4 inches

REAL



Inner circle of state seal is light blue; outer circle is dark blue.
Height: 2 1/4 inches

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

FAKE



Identical to badge worn on shirt before September and current wallet badge. **Height: 2 inches**

REAL



Star under "Texas"; includes rank after "Trooper."
Height: 2 inches

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2001

Law Badges

Not everything needs collecting.

Seems it's exceedingly simple to purchase look-alike police or sheriff's badges over the Internet or at flea markets or gun shows.

That makes the possibility of being accosted or duped by a poseur flashing an official-looking shield uncomfortably real.

A new law makes it a federal offense to display a phony badge or sell one — counterfeit or real — to someone not authorized to have it. It's also a crime under Texas law.

But collectors are exempted, which leaves an easy market for impostors who seek out careless or shady merchants.

What's to keep a miscreant from offering innocent reasons to buy a badge and then using it for sinister purposes?

That sounds like a good reason to tighten the restrictions and eliminate the hobbyists' exemption. There are plenty of other collectibles out there that carry fewer implications for public safety and confidence.

OPINIONS

SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2001

Justice

In response to Kay Newberry's March 3 letter, "Snake pit": Kay, I hate to inform you, but those prisoners are in jail — they

are not in a country club.

Convicts have committed crimes not conducive to a decent society. These prisoners are fed and kept by local officials on our tax dollars. They are not there to play poker or Nintendo or to watch TV all day. They are doing penance for their crimes against other individuals and/or the state. These men and women committed these crimes, and therefore they should do their time. This "hell on earth" in Tarrant County needs to be hell on earth!

Don't worry about these prisoners — they will do their time and either be reformed or be let out to commit more crimes. Justice is justice — leave it alone!

Marlene Hughett
Springtown

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2001

Helping the criminals

Wednesday's story on counterfeit law enforcement badges was very beneficial and informative — especially to those criminal types wanting to get a badge of their own.

To explain the differences in the badges might help some people gain the upper hand in a situation that could pose danger, and that was a very notable effort. To go on and name the places where fake badges were acquired lacked some thinking somewhere along the way.

Those shady people who have been wanting one now have the tools to go out and fulfill their wants.

It would have been more prudent to say "one online service" instead of Joe's Badge Emporium or whatever the name was.

Criminals don't need any help in furthering their careers.

Dena Martin
Grapevine

OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

www.star-telegram.com / Wednesday, March 14, 2001

Enjoyable

I am usually not one for watching award shows, but I watched Friday night's NAACP 32nd Image Awards with rapturous emotion. I caught myself, time and again, reaching for the tissues.

I am not too familiar with many of today's black artists, and some of the names were foreign to me. However, the program certainly brought back memo-

rable performances of many of my favorite black actors from the past and present. Sidney Poitier's spirited acceptance speech was especially poignant.

I have, from time to time, rented movies featuring black performers. One of the most recent was *The Shawshank Redemption*, which features the soulful talent of Morgan Freeman.

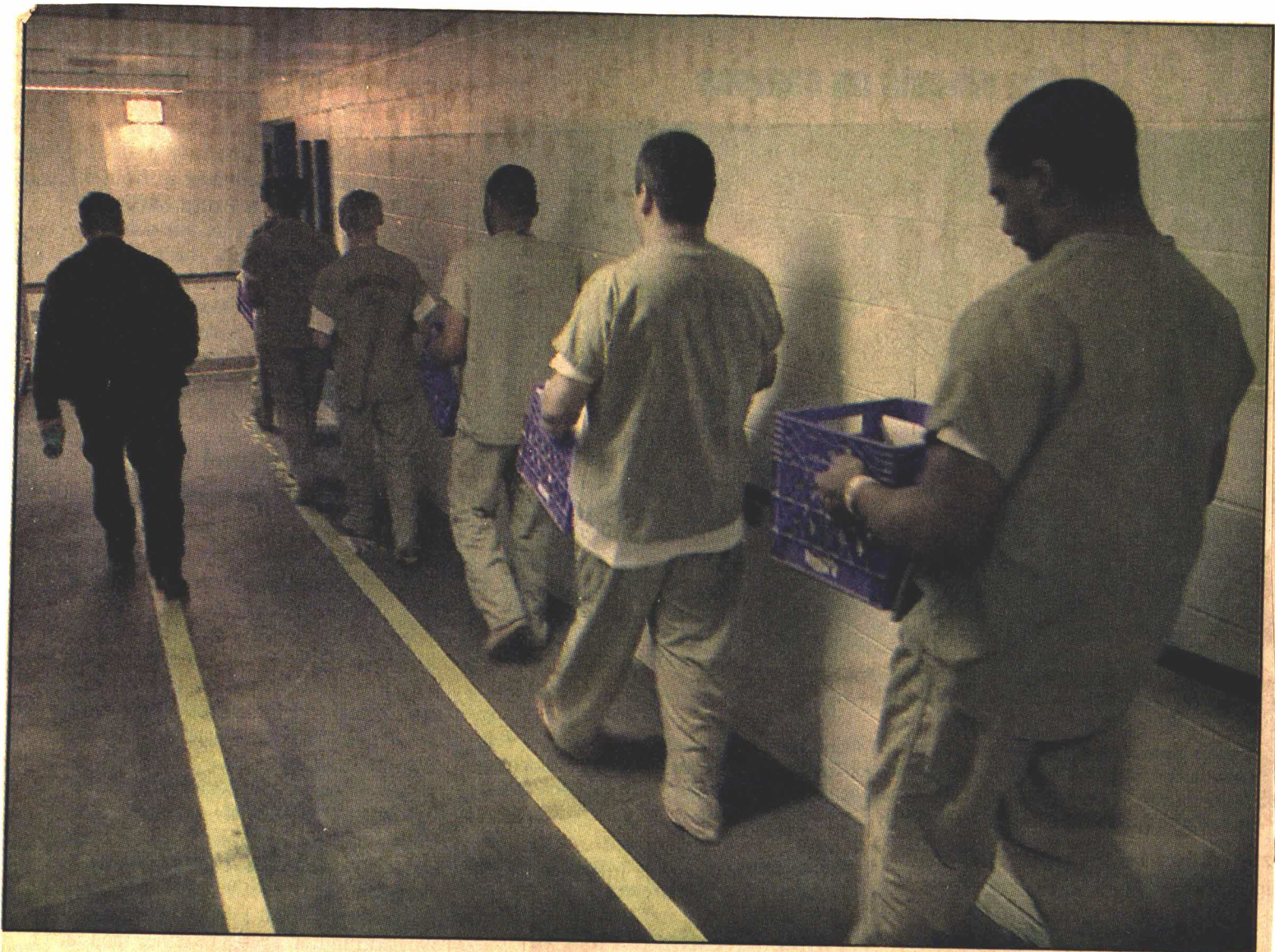
In a world filled with so much racial conflict, I also found former President Clinton's tribute filled with grace and tranquility, especially his closing phrase: "Diversity is what molds us. If we forget it, we all suffer; if we remember it, we all prosper."

It was truly one of the most enjoyable programs I have watched in quite some time.

Floyd F. Clark
Fort Worth

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2001

County to close its oldest jail



Star-Telegram/RON T. ENNIS

Under the supervision of a county jailer, inmates carry belongings Tuesday through a tunnel between the old jail and the newer facility.

Shift of inmates is part of plan to trim budget

By KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — The county's oldest and most inefficient jail will close this week after its 240 inmates are transferred to the newer Green Bay Confinement Facility or the Tarrant County Corrections Center, officials said Tuesday.

The consolidation is part of a plan to make the jail system less of a drain on the county budget, Executive Chief Deputy Bob Knowles said. Officials will also look for ways the jails can generate money, such as taking state inmates on contract, he said.

Sheriff Dee Anderson announced the closing of the old jail at 300 W. Belknap St. during the Commissioners Court meeting Tuesday, drawing applause from county department heads, County Judge Tom Vandergriff and all four commissioners.

"I think we have to give this a round of applause, and we don't issue our applause lightly," Commissioner Dionne Bagsby said.

At \$46 million a year, the confinement division accounts for nearly two-thirds of the budget in the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department.

All the inmates were expected to be moved by Tuesday evening, said Knowles, who oversees confinement for the Sheriff's Department.

"This is just the start of what the sheriff has told us to do," he said.

Blue crates filled with inmates' books, coffee mugs and other personal belongings lined the hallways of the 40-year-old jail Tuesday afternoon, as officials worked to clear five floors of cells and bus inmates to the other jails.

Some other county inmates at a newer city-county jail next door at 350 W. Belknap St., on the top floors of the Fort Worth Police Department, will also be moved within the week to further consolidate operations, Knowles said.

After the inmates are gone, six of the 11 floors in the old Belknap

jail building will be used for sheriff's administration, building maintenance and to provide space for spare trial rooms.

County officials hope to eventually close and tear down that building, but no immediate plans have been made, Facilities Manager Gary Kirby said.

The consolidation will reduce the county's number of jails from four to 2½, with some room left for overflow, said Terry Grisham, the department's executive administrator. The countywide inmate population has less than 75 percent of its 4,100 capacity.

Estimates on how much the consolidation will save are expected within a month, Anderson said.

Layoffs are not anticipated because the 111 jailers, supervisors and ancillary staff at the jail at 300 W. Belknap — along with many of the 129 employees in the city-county jail at 350 W. Belknap who will move with the inmates — will be absorbed by systemwide jail staff shortages, Knowles said.

The outdated design of the oldest facility made it the most inefficient county building in terms of labor.

By comparison, the maximum-security floor at the Tarrant County Correction Center, built in 1991 at 100 N. Lamar a block west of the older jails, allows for a ratio of one jailer for every 48 inmates, the minimum set by state jail standards.

It is difficult for one guard at Belknap to supervise 48 inmates, however, because the jail, designed in the 1950s, has columns, solid doors and narrow catwalks. The Belknap facility has a ratio as low as one guard for every seven to 15 inmates.

The confinement division's overtime costs reached a peak of \$80,000 a week in December and had already been reduced to \$10,000 last week through heavy recruitment efforts and more efficient scheduling, Grisham said.

Karen Brooks, (817) 390-7752
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the
INSIDER
report

SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2001

Talk among Republicans at their recent Lincoln Day Dinner wasn't about President Bush or Texas Sen. **Phil Gramm** but about former Tarrant County Sheriff **David Williams**.

Williams appeared at the event wearing a sticker/badge showing that he had paid \$250 for his ticket. Then Williams worked the room. When he was in office, the reclusive sheriff had to be begged to attend such events, much less schmooze.

This fuels speculation that Williams — who at one time said he intended to be a "force in Tarrant County politics" after leaving office — may run for office again.

This led one GOP activist to moan that the Democratic Party can get rid of **Bill Clinton**, but the local Republicans can't seem to shake Williams.

This week's contributors: **JOHN MORITZ**,
MAX B. BAKER, **BOB MAHLBURG**
and **JACK DOUGLAS JR.**

■ **LETTERS, FAXES AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR**

MONDAY, APRIL 2, 2001

Something missing

I am wondering why we are not hearing calls for congressional hearings and the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate the Secret Service's involvement in the release of an intoxication suspect from a Tarrant County jail.

Surely the president's daughter could not possibly have been involved. Could she? It must pay to have friends in high places.

Willie M. Smith
Arlington

No covering up

Thank you, *Star-Telegram*, for being the only major publication that I have found to be fair and accurate in your reporting of the Bush-daughter's-friend story. You have not fallen under the

+

wings of the pro-conservative, pro-Republican Texas media, which seem to decide what is news and what isn't news based on political views.

Nothing should ever be covered up as the result of politics. That is what the government does; that is what the military does; and when we find out about cover-ups years later, we mistrust our government. That should not be what the press does.

As a journalism grad student at the University of North Texas, I don't want people to mistrust me once I am a reporter. But the actions of negligent or easily bought reporters who do not report what is truly news will result in more allegations of conspiracy in the press, just as happens with the government and military, and then everyone who is part of the press gets hurt!

The Washington liberals should demand an investigation into this matter that (as it at least appears) either the Republicans or their friends are trying so hard to keep quiet.

Robin Fletcher
Mineral Wells

■ **LETTERS, FAXES AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR**

THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2001

Misguided dream

I read, with much disgust, the April 5 article concerning a local woman's spray-painting a building with graffiti and a desire to throw a bottle through its window, in the fulfillment of her dream, even though the building was to be demolished.

What kind of message is this sending to the misguided culprits who daily deface public and private property throughout the area? Could they not proclaim that this is the realization of their dream?

And to further have the Tarrant County director of facilities assert in the same article that "we are real supporters of the field of dreams," as if rendering credence to such action!

I think the woman and the county director should be assigned to a graffiti task force to help eradicate such activity — or, at the very least, seek help if such visionary abstractions of defacement continue to ardently dominate their suppressed reveries.

Floyd F. Clark
Fort Worth

■ EDITORIALS

Tarrant Sheriff

What a difference a hundred days makes.

Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson has one thing in common with his predecessor other than his elected title: He doesn't return phone calls on Tuesday mornings.

But that's where the comparison ends. The former sheriff wouldn't return calls regardless of the time or day; Anderson doesn't get back to people on Tuesday mornings because he's attending the weekly Commissioners Court meeting.

What a refreshing change for the taxpayers of Tarrant County.

If Anderson had done nothing but attend those meetings in his first 100 days as sheriff, he still would have been more publicly accessible than David Williams ever was during the second of his two terms.

But Anderson has done more than make himself available; the 44-year-old former Arlington police spokesman is already changing the culture within the Sheriff's Department.

Once a place where employees were conditioned to believe that being still was the best way to stay out of trouble, the department now is a place where employees are encouraged to take ownership of the daily operations.

One example of how doing things differently has paid off for the taxpayers was the department's involvement in this month's racing events at Texas Motor Speedway.

"We play a small part in the security for NASCAR races," Anderson said. "Prior to this year's race, we asked patrol guys to look hard at what they did and how they did it, and how we could be more efficient. We saved almost \$90,000 over last year's budget."

Anderson's use of the term *we* is not by mistake. He readily admits that his operation is pure team effort, and that any accomplishments he has made would be impossible without his command staff working in concert.

"Anybody who thinks he can isolate himself and run a 1,200-member department by himself is foolish," he said. "We've got 10 guys who can run this operation if I wasn't here. I don't make decisions in a vacuum. Everything is discussed among us."

Anderson's primary achievement during his first weeks in office was to refocus the department on its core service: the jail. At \$46 million a year, the confinement division accounts for more than

70 percent of the department's \$64 million annual budget.

By closing the county's oldest and most inefficient unit on West Belknap Street in Fort Worth, the department was able to consolidate inmates in two facilities and remove a potential liability from the taxpayers' plate.

"Our prisoner-to-guard ratio was the worst — 1-to-7 — costing taxpayers every day it was open," Anderson said. "It was bad on prisoners, bad on employees — a lawsuit waiting to happen."

When Anderson informed commissioners of this decision in March, he was applauded by county department heads, County Judge Tom Vandergriff and all four commissioners.

That, too, is a change from his predecessor.

Fort Worth police officers can feel the shift in leadership every time they take prisoners to the jail. Executive Chief Deputy Bob Knowles, who heads up the confinement operations, has reduced the amount of time that officers must spend off the street to complete the booking process.

The only public criticism thus far of Anderson has come from people who thought the department provided preferential treatment to an 18-year-old friend of President Bush's daughter Jenna when the young man was arrested in February for investigation of public intoxication.

"It became a point of interest because of the players involved," Anderson said.

"I got the call at home that we had arrested this person claiming to be Jenna Bush's boyfriend. My instructions were to treat him like anybody else but take precautions that he doesn't get hurt if he's saying it in front of other prisoners. He was spouting off some pretty powerful names. Boastful prisoners sometimes become targets of others."

Perhaps the most telling evidence of the cultural change within the Sheriff's Department is the decreased turnover rate among employees.

"The attrition rate has dropped off. People are wanting to stay, and new people are wanting to work here. It's an acceptable place of employment. That's tremendously gratifying," Anderson said.

It should be. For too many years, Sheriff's Department employees were less than proud — and some were even ashamed — to tell people where they worked. Anderson has helped to restore pride and dignity to the men and women who quietly kept that department afloat through the last eight years.

Probation officers will get to use vacant Cold Spring Jail site

Neighborhood residents like this plan more than a previous plan to house state inmates.

By **KAREN BROOKS**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — The vacant Cold Springs Jail will be used as a temporary office for county probation employees while their building is renovated, county commissioners decided Tuesday.

The decision delays plans to lease the jail to house state inmates for at least a year.

About 200 probationers will check in with probation officers each day at Cold Springs while the county completes \$2 million in renovations to the Charles Griffin Annex on Miller Avenue, which is expected to take a year.

Temporarily modifying Cold Springs, a converted schoolhouse with a modern jail addition, to suit the probation department's needs will cost \$250,000, officials said.

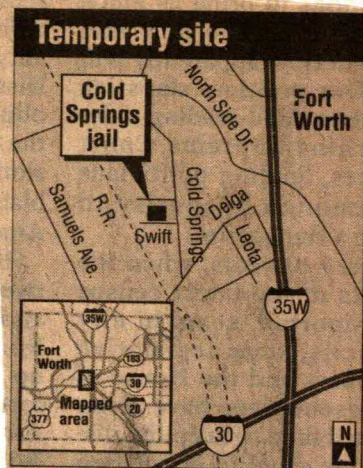
The figure includes the \$10,000 officials say it will cost to bring the facility back to jail standards next year if the county decides to lease it, Facilities

Manager Gary Kirby said.

Neighborhood residents were skeptical of plans to house inmates at the north Fort Worth unit, which closed in 1995. On Tuesday, residents welcomed the delay and said that using the space for probation officers was a safer alternative.

"I think it's a good move," said Glenn Spoons, vice chairwoman of the Greenway Neighborhood Development Corp. "The fact that they're on probation says something about them. The level of risk is less than it would be for your inmate-type situation."

A deal to lease the jail to a private company to house inmates would have brought about \$900,000 a year into



county coffers, but commissioners tanked it in January amid concerns over how the company, Correctional Services

Corp., was managing a boot camp in Mansfield.

Rather than rebid the contract, commissioners voted 3-1 on Tuesday to temporarily modify part of the facility and let about 80 employees of the Community Supervision and Corrections Department use it.

Commissioner J.D. Johnson, who heads the county's Jail Standards Commission, voted against the plan because he favors leasing the jail and suspects that it would cost more than the estimated \$10,000 to return it to jail standards after the probation department leaves.

The county should lease the jail portion of Cold Springs, renovate the older schoolhouse

section for the probation department and put it to use after the probation department moved out next year, Johnson said.

"We'll use that facility eventually," he said.

Kirby said the old schoolhouse was too small to use and would be too expensive to renovate.

County Judge Tom Vandergriff was absent from Tuesday's regular Commissioners Court meeting.

Sheriff Dee Anderson, who would have to sign the contract to lease the facility, said he didn't anticipate needing the jail space within the year, if at all.

Commissioner Dionne Bagny, who proposed allowing the probation department to use the building two weeks ago, said commissioners shouldn't assume they will want to bring the facility back to jail standards in a year.

"The best use of it may not be as a jail," said Bagny, who represents the area.

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Deputies to record traffic stop data

By **KAREN BROOKS**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Tarrant County sheriff's deputies will be required to record the race, age and other personal information of every motorist they stop to begin tracking whether racial profiling is occurring, Sheriff Dee Anderson said Friday.

Anderson said he wants to begin collecting data now to "stay ahead of the curve."

Effort intended as way to fight racial profiling

"This is something that's coming," Anderson said. "It's going to be required of law enforcement in the near future one way or the other — legislatively or federally — and it's an important message to send, not only to the citizens but also internally.

"We're going to be watching this and tracking it, and we're going to be doing things the right way."

Community leaders praised the program as a step toward the national goal of ending racial profiling, the practice of stopping motorists or hassling them on stops because of their race.

"There's a strong belief that there are persons who have been stopped

(More on PROFILING on Page 8B)

PROFILING

From Page 1B

just because of their race, especially at certain times of the day and in certain neighborhoods," said Robert Starr, vice president of the Fort Worth chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "This is something that the national office has been advocating for some time. I'm extremely pleased to hear they're doing it in Tarrant County."

The program, which Anderson hopes will be under way by summer, is similar to a system Arlington police implemented in September.

Jeff Nicholson, chief of the sheriff's information technology and central records division, will run the county system. Nicholson started the program in Arlington, where he was the department's information systems specialist before joining the sheriff's office in February.

After each traffic stop, patrol officers will be required to enter demographic information about the driver into the mobile computers in each patrol vehicle, whether or not the officer writes a ticket. The information includes the driver's race or ethnicity, gender, age (adult or minor), the reason for the stop and whether a

search was conducted.

By implementing the system now, Anderson is a step ahead of the Texas Legislature, which is considering more comprehensive data collection and video requirements that supporters say will hold traffic officers accountable.

U.S. civil rights leaders have made racial profiling a key issue in recent years. Former President Clinton ordered federal law enforcement agencies in 1999 to collect data and study the issue. This year, President Bush called for an end to racial profiling.

County Judge Tom Vandergriff said he would "reserve judgment" on Anderson's plan until Tuesday's meeting of the Commissioners Court, where the sheriff is expected to describe the system. Vandergriff said he was not well-versed in the racial profiling issue and wanted to hear more details.

Fort Worth police have no immediate plans to begin a similar tracking system but it could come in the future, police Lt. Duane Paul said. Police officials are watching how other departments do the tracking.


"It's not something that has been ruled out. We just want to make sure that whatever we do implement, it is fair and works well," Paul said.

Staff writer **Bill Teeter** contributed to this report.

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Donnie Paul Roberts



 **BENBROOK** — Donnie Paul Roberts, 58, a Tarrant County Deputy Sheriff, passed away Sunday, April 29, 2001 at home.

Funeral: 11:30 a.m. Thursday at Mount Olivet Chapel. Burial: Mount Olivet Cemetery. Visitation: 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at Mount Olivet Funeral Home.

Memorials: May be made to Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children.

Donnie was born on April 12, 1943 in Fort Worth. He lived in Fort Worth all his life and was a graduate of TCII. He served in the US Army in

Germany and was a deputy sheriff for 10 years. He was a member of Ridglea Christian Church. He was preceded in death by his grandmother, Effie Roberts who raised him; a brother, James McCarthey; and sisters, Patty McCarthey and Paula Lynn Mullins.

Survivors: Wife of 35 years, Judy Roberts of Benbrook; daughters, Beatrice and husband, Thomas Schuler of Germany, Susan and husband, Steve Collier of Benbrook, Diane and husband, Vernon White of Roanoke, Cindy and husband, Michael Mills of Arlington; sister, Judy Tearnan and husband, Rob of Ramona, Calif.; mother, Dorothy Walthall of Ramona, Calif.; father, Neiland Roberts of Levelland; grandchildren, Sarah Collier, Michael Collier, Matthew Collier, Robert Collier, Zachary Collier, Melissa Schuler and James Schuler.

Mount Olivet Funeral Home
2301 N. Sylvania Ave., (817) 831-0511

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2001

Sheriff names chief patrol deputy

Promotion completes Tarrant department's leadership team

By DEANNA BOYD
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Leon "Rick" Flowers, community relations coordinator for the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department, has been named chief deputy over patrol, Sheriff Dee Anderson said Wednesday.

Flowers' promotion from lieutenant fills the last vacancy in Anderson's top command.

Flowers, 51, a Fort Worth resident for 13 years, will oversee about 50 deputies who patrol unincorporated Tarrant County.

"I have no plans to go in and make major changes right off the bat," Flowers said. "Any changes that come about will be made for the benefit of the department."

Flowers said he hopes to increase deputies' visibility.

"In the city of Fort Worth,

for example, people who live in the inner city may have never come in contact with members of the Sheriff's Department and don't understand our role," Flowers said. "They don't realize what we have to offer."

Anderson said 21 sheriff's employees applied for the position. "Lieutenant Flowers came out on top in a very close selection process," Anderson said.

Although Flowers has no experience in the patrol area, his 20 years of military experience and work in the community more than make up for that, Anderson said.

"His experience, his beliefs and his vision for the future are very in tune for what we were looking for," Anderson said.

Flowers joined the Sheriff's Department as a detention

center officer in 1992. He had retired from the Army in 1988 at the rank of captain in the military police.

As community relations coordinator, Flowers was an instructor for D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and an instructor of GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training).

He is also a jazz musician who teaches martial arts and West African drumming to several youth groups. He founded Drums of Knowledge, a program that focuses on drumming as an alternative for gangs, drugs and violence.

Flowers is the second African-American man in the department's top 10 positions, which includes Anderson, the executive administrator, two executive chief deputies and six chief deputies.

Commissioner Dionne

Bagsby had previously expressed concern that Anderson's top brass consisted largely of Anglo men and had no women. She could not be reached to comment Wednesday about Anderson's latest appointment.

Anderson said that although he wants his staff to reflect the community, Flowers was not chosen because he is African-American.

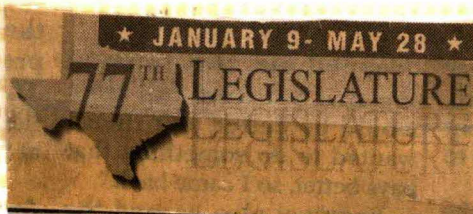
"It certainly wasn't done for that," Anderson said. "If he finished fourth in that process, he would have been fourth. If he had finished second, he wouldn't have gotten the job."

Staff writer Melody McDonald contributed to this report.



Flowers

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On the homefront

The Senate curtailed the Tarrant County sheriff's access to his jail commissary funds and gave control of them to county commissioners. A bill by Rep. **Glenn Lewis**, a Fort Worth Democrat, and Sen. **Chris Harris**, R-

Arlington, is limited to Tarrant County and was filed in response to financial troubles that surfaced with Sheriff **David Williams**, whose tenure ended in January. Commissioners long complained that Williams was misusing the account to pay for a jail chaplaincy program run by one of his friends.

■ LETTERS, FAXES AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR

TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2001

A refreshing sheriff

Every once in a while, somewhere, a new sheriff is elected who sincerely wants to do his very best for the public he serves. It seems that such a person has been elected in Tarrant County.

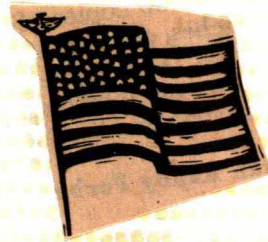
Having only served for a short time, Sheriff Dee Anderson is already proving that he is both efficient and dedicated to the task. He has demonstrated a real concern for his employees and the taxpayers whom he serves. He has displayed an attitude that is of the finest.

Thank you, Sheriff Anderson, for the breath of fresh air. We all needed it.

David H. Carpenter
Fort Worth

Sunday, June 24, 2001

COMMENTARY



Looking back

With the release of the current movie *Pearl Harbor* and as a tribute to our veterans, I hope you would share with your readers this poem composed during my college days:

Remembering

You can shout, "Remember Pearl Harbor!"
You can shout it o'er and o'er;
Yet, one thought lingers in American hearts:

That one is Corregidor.

I remember, still, our Navy men
Who sailed with the breeze
And lost their lives on the Lexington
That went down in the Coral Seas.

Days of ration stamps and victory bonds
Often flood my dreams —
Did it really happen so long ago,
Or yesterday like it seems?

I can't stop the tears from flowing
No matter how hard I try,
Seeing the star hanging in a window
Of a friend's home when I walk by.

I pray that there may come a day
When we can all live in harmony;
But never forget the stains left there
On the sandy shores of Normandy.

Floyd F. Clark
Fort Worth

New laws affect how counties do business

The Legislature settled the long-running dispute over the Tarrant jail commissary.

BY KAREN BROOKS
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — One of the biggest victories for Tarrant County in the recently concluded 77th Legislature came about 16 years late — and may never be useful again.

Legislators removed control of Tarrant County's jail commissary fund from the Sheriff's Depart-

ment and returned it to the Commissioners Court — eliminating the chances of repeating one of the longest controversies between the two county agencies. The fight has pitted sheriffs and commissioners courts in the county for more than a decade.

"Been there, done that, don't need to go there again," said Sen. Mike Moncrief, D-Fort Worth, one of the bill's sponsors.

The bill, written by Fort Worth Rep. Glenn Lewis, vice chairman of the House County Affairs Committee, was among a series of vic-

(More on LAWS on Page 7B)

ment and returned it to the Commissioners Court — eliminating the chances of repeating one of the longest controversies between the two county agencies. The fight has pitted sheriffs and commissioners courts in the county for more than a decade.

A couple of favored issues were defeated, but reams of bills affecting the way counties do business — from uniform election dates that save on election costs to expanding eligibility for indigent care at county hospitals — were among the 1,600 bills passed.

County staffers, judges, commissioners, court officers and other county officials kept tabs on more than 800 bills.

All but two of Tarrant County's top seven priorities made it into law.

Among the losses was funding for a regional emergency siren system, which would have been financed through additional 911 charges. The bill, by freshman Rep. Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth, died at the hands of the telephone lobby, which opposed increases in phone fees.

Tarrant County had some heavy hitters among its two senators and 10 representatives. Collectively, they have more than a century in the Legislature and hold four committee chairmanships and two vice chairmanships.

County Judge Tom Vandergriff said the delegation pulled off a "very gratifying session

from our standpoint."

Much of what the delegation did was to kill or modify bills that would have harmed the county.

"We played a lot of defense this session," said Mark Mendez, the county's legislative coordinator, who spent most of the last six months lobbying in Austin.

A bill that helps poor people accused of crimes get adequate defense was modified to the county's advantage: If an inmate posts bail before charges are filed, an attorney does not have to be appointed until the first appearance in court. The provision shaves several days off the attorney's time and charges, paid by the county.

Another change also gave urban counties a seat on an indigent-defense task force that will set up rules for implementing the new law.

A bill by state Rep. Lon Burnam, D-Fort Worth, resolved an unusual city-county quandary. Maintenance of about 10 miles of roads in spots throughout the county had been disputed because of patchwork annexation by Tar-

rant's 40 cities. Cities annexed right up to the middle of the street and then fought with the county over which jurisdiction should maintain the road.

Now, a city must maintain the road if it annexes any part of it, saving the county money on road repairs in areas it

doesn't control, Mendez said.

A measure by state Rep. Todd Smith, R-Euless, expands the jurisdiction of County Criminal Court No. 10 to allow contested citations for speeding, public intoxication and other misdemeanors.

The law should relieve some of the backlog in Judge Jamie Cummings' court, which hears many family violence cases every month, said Judge Phil Sorrells, whose Court No. 10 will handle the extra tickets.

"I have the smallest docket in the courthouse, so I told her I'd be more than happy to take those Class C tickets to allow her to dedicate more of her time to the family violence cases," said Sorrells, who says he averages between 25 and 75 fewer cases a month than Cummings.

Fort Worth Rep. Kim Brimer's so-called Intel bill gives counties more authority to offer tax abatements to woo businesses.

Commissioners were also glad to hear that they can now call special meetings anywhere in the county, not just in the county seat.

The bill, which originally allowed the regular meetings to be held anywhere, was opposed by rural and smaller counties that wanted to maintain the integrity of the county seat.

Another new law closes a loophole that allows large companies to get tax abatements for routine replacement of equipment by contending that the updated technology decreases pollution.

Mendez said there are no abuses of that law in Tarrant County. But in Jefferson County, in Southeast Texas, more than \$250 million fell off the tax rolls over several years when industries abused the law, he said.

Staving off the potential for abuse in another area, the jail

Tarrant-supported bills approved in last Legislature

■ **HOUSE BILL:** 1890 by Rep. Glenn Lewis, D-Fort Worth

What it does: Requires Tarrant County sheriff to get commissioners' approval before spending the jail commissary fund.

What it means: More county control over the fund, which is earmarked for inmate services.

■ **HOUSE BILL:** 1041 by Rep. Todd Smith, R-Euless

What it does: Increases the number of courts for appealing traffic, public intoxication and other misdemeanor tickets.

What it means: The backlog of ticket appeals will decrease, reducing the wait before contesting tickets.

■ **SENATE BILL:** 542 by Sen. Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound

What it does: Allows Commissioners Court to call special meetings anywhere in the county, not just the county seat.

What it means: Residents of outlying parts of the county have greater access to meetings and work sessions if the county can hold those meetings closer to them.

■ **SENATE BILL:** 79 by Sen. Florence Shapiro, R-Plano

What it does: Sets up four uniform election dates, in February, May, September and November. Does not apply to runoffs or other emergency elections.

What it means: Counties can reduce costs by consolidating elections when possible.

■ **HOUSE BILL:** 631 by Rep. Sylvester Turner, D-Houston

What it does: Changes pound and gallon limits for illegally dumping litter or other solid waste.

What it means: Cuts down on illegal dumping in remote areas of the county, which has to pay to clean it up.

■ **SENATE BILL:** 961 by Sen. Mike Moncrief, D-Fort Worth

What it does: Allows counties to supplement the pay of state-employed Child Protective Services caseworkers.

What it means: Although Tarrant County CPS board members say they have no immediate plans to do this, it allows the county to give raises to historically low-paid caseworkers.

Star-Telegram

commissary fund, led to the county's biggest victory, officials said.

County officials have long been suspicious of the sheriff's control over the fund. A portion of the proceeds from the privately owned commissary go into an inmate welfare fund that, until now, was completely controlled by the sheriff.

The dispute started in 1985 with former Sheriff Don Carpenter, who had bought the business — known as "the Banana Wagon" — from the sheriff who started it in 1961. Carpenter became so tired of arguing with commissioners over the fund that he sold the business to a private company.

Sheriff David Williams, who was replaced by Sheriff Dee Anderson in January, was criticized for using the commissary fund for various purchases, including Bibles and exercise equipment for inmates.

The new law, which applies only to Tarrant County, now requires commissioners' approval before the sheriff can spend the money in the fund.

"We can offer a silent prayer for the death of the Banana Wagon," Commissioner Glen Whitley said.

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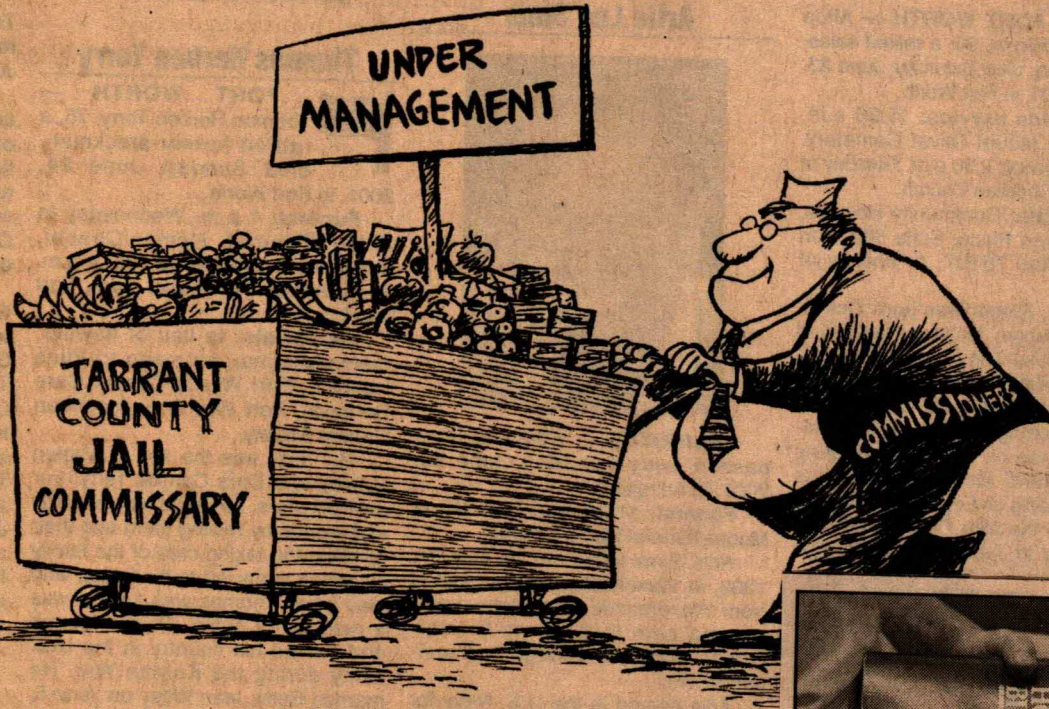
OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2001

■ **ETTA HULME**

ETTA © 2001 FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM
HULME



ETTA HULME is the *Star-Telegram's* editorial cartoonist. You can reach her at 390-7665.



Star-Telegram Archives/RON T. ENNIS
A Tarrant County Jail prisoner holds a Bible in his lap during Bible study in 1998 in the Tarrant County Jail's "God pod."

'God pod' ends after justices' decision

Texas Supreme Court says Tarrant jail's Christian unit is unconstitutional.

By JOHN MORITZ
Star-Telegram Austin Bureau

AUSTIN — The Tarrant County Jail's Christian Education Unit, known as the "God pod" under former Sheriff David Williams, violated the constitutional separation of church and state, the Texas Supreme Court ruled Thursday.

The new Sheriff's Department administration dismantled the unit shortly after the ruling was issued and assigned its 63 inmates to the jail's general population.

"The God pod no longer exists," Chief Deputy Jim Willett said. "After reviewing the court order, the consensus was to shut it down."

Inmates in the Christian Education Unit were kept separate from the rest of the prisoners and undertook structured religious training. They were forbidden to watch nonreligious programs on television, except for news and sports shows on the weekends.

The state's highest civil court said that because the wing operated under the direction of Williams and other county employees who set the religious curriculum, it amounted to an arm of the state establishing a religion for a segment of the population.

The justices sent the case back to the trial court to determine if any of the people who brought the lawsuit are entitled to monetary damages.

Williams lost a bid for reelection to Dee Anderson last year. The new administration had already revamped the program to make sure that inmates of all faiths could participate, Willett said.

The decision was made to end the program, he said, to make sure that the department is not promoting religion.

Anderson's office said he was

out of state at a conference and could not be reached for comment Thursday. Williams, who generally avoided reporters while he was sheriff, could not be located for comment.

Willett said that if an inmate wants religious counseling, he can ask a jailer and the request will be passed along to the director of inmate services.

He said that inmates can also ask to meet in groups with clergy members, and that the requests will be considered case by case to make sure the meetings do not compromise jail security.

"We will not be the ones organizing religious activities for the inmates," Willett said. "And we won't be denying to those who ask for it and can abide by the rules that are needed to run a jail."

Willett said there are no plans to appeal to the federal courts.

Jim Norwood, an evangelical Christian who has volunteered to work in the unit since it was established, was disheartened

by the ruling and by the Sheriff's Department's decision to shut down the program.

"It grieves me that there was so much attention paid to what might have been wrong with the program or what might not have been technically legal

with the program, and by the failure to see the good that came out of it," said Norwood, who served on the Arlington City Council in the mid-1980s.

"I'm talking about lives being changed," Norwood added. "I'm talking about three-, four- and five-time losers who are now married with decent jobs and working to better their community."

The suit was brought by two former inmates — one Jewish and the other a Jehovah's Witness — and a Texas Christian University professor.

The Southwest Region of the American Jewish Congress joined in the litigation and hailed the court's decision as "a dramatic victory for church-state separation."

Williams, Tarrant County sheriff from 1993 through 2000, established the unit so inmates who chose to participate could receive religious instruction under the guidance of Christian volunteers. He frequently defended the program from allegations that it

violated the separation of church and state doctrine, saying that participation was voluntary and that inmates who took part were likely to emerge as better citizens.

But in its unanimous opinion, the high court said the sheriff overstepped his bounds because the program was operated with taxpayer money.

"We conclude as a matter of law that based on the record in this case, the County's operation of the [Christian Education Unit] is an unconstitutional establishment of religion," said Justice Deborah Hankinson, writing for the court.

Dallas lawyer Richard Rohan, who represented former inmate Ruth Maree Lara, said that as he prepared for trial, it appeared he had an open-and-shut case.

"It struck me as a fairly egregious set of facts," said Rohan, whose client is Jewish. "You had the sheriff running a religious program that was only open to one religious point of view."

Another plaintiff's lawyer, Lanny Priddy, said the case

was never about whether religious instruction should be available in the jail. The dispute was over equal access.

"I think it's fairly clear that the jail probably has an obligation to provide it," said Priddy, who represented former inmate Michael Huff, a member of Jehovah's Witnesses, and Ronald Flowers, a TCU religion professor who joined in the lawsuit. "A jail chaplaincy is like a military chaplaincy. It should be open to people of all faiths."

Kelly Shackelford, the chief lawyer for the conservative Liberty Legal Foundation, said his organization was heartened because the Texas court acknowledged that religious exercise must be protected in county jails.

"We're encouraged, frankly, because the court did not put a blanket prohibition on religion," Shackelford said. "They said there is a place for religious activity in the jails."

Officials say voluntary religious programs will remain

Prisoners mourn end of 'God pod'

By **BOB MAHLBURG**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Some Tarrant County Jail prisoners joined hands on Friday, shed tears and sang *Jesus Lifted Me* — one day after the Texas Supreme Court struck down the jail's Christian education program.

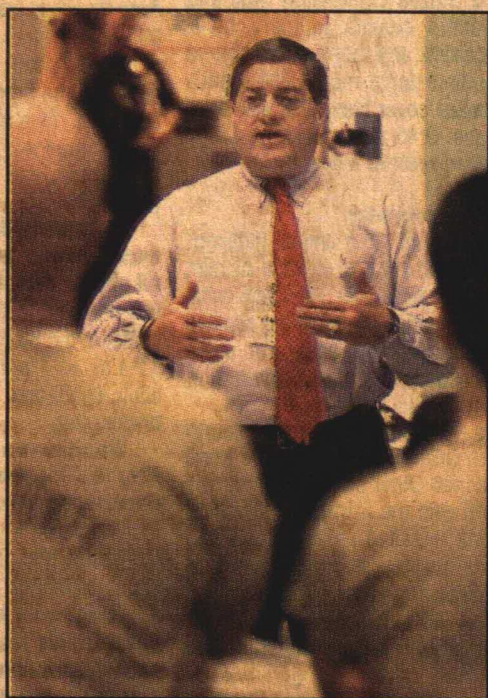
County officials reassured prisoners in the so-called "God pod" that although the jail program was being disbanded, voluntary religious programs for prisoners will remain.

God pod prisoners said Friday that they were sad that the program was being dismantled.

"It's never been a thing where the door was closed to other faiths," said William Wise, 43. "I don't really see it as promoting one religion."

Former Sheriff David Williams formed the

(More on POD on Page 14B)



Star-Telegram/RON T. ENNIS

Terry Grisham, executive administrator for the Sheriff's Department, addresses prisoners Friday about the "God pod" ruling by the Texas Supreme Court.

Chaplain's Education Unit in 1993, saying that a section of the jail dedicated to teaching fundamentalist Christian beliefs could turn inmates away from crime.

But the Texas Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that the religious program violates the constitutional wall between church and state because it is supported with taxpayer money.

Sheriff Dee Anderson, who defeated Williams last year, had already made some changes to make sure that the jail is not promoting religion, Sheriff's Department Executive Administrator Terry Grisham said.

"We want to make sure every inmate has the same access and not segregate them and teach one narrow orthodoxy," Grisham said Friday.

Instead of focusing religion on one group of prisoners, everyone should have access to religious books, ministers and other material, he said.

County commissioners and Anderson have long questioned the wisdom of the God pod but did not make changes because of the court case, Grisham said.

"Our attorneys told us, while it was on appeal, we should maintain the status quo," he said.

Officials are happy with the ruling, Grisham said, adding, "We felt like religious education in that pod was limited and unfairly so."

Responding to a request for comment, Williams made this statement Friday evening: "I have faith in the system. I believe the system works. It's not perfect, but it's what we have to work with. The reason I ran for sheriff is because I care about people. I like to help hurting people. I'm thankful for the opportunities to help people who are hurting, both victims and offenders."

David Barrett, who began work last week as the sheriff's director of inmate services, said the emphasis will be on making religion available on request.

"Any faith member that requests religious services, we will see those needs are met," said Barrett, adding he has a list of volunteer ministers that include Muslim, Jehovah Witness, Jewish and American Indian. "If we don't have them on the list, we'll get on the phone and find someone to minister to them."

The 63 inmates in the pod may be split up and moved to other parts of the jail, based on how prisoners are classified by offense and security risk.

In what one official labeled "an impromptu revival meeting," God pod prisoners, dressed in tan jail-issue jumpsuits, formed a circle, clasped hands and prayed while reporters and TV cameras recorded steps to dismantle the unit Friday, such as removing a piano used for singing hymns.

"They know the situation, and this is like goodbye," Jail Commander James Moore said. "It's out of respect."

Wise, who led the group in a prayer, said prisoners have benefited from being in the God pod.

"We all get along and love each other," said Wise of Fort Worth, who has been in the God pod for about four months. "This is something I've needed in my life."

The inmates are accused of crimes ranging from misdemeanors to murder, Wise said.

"There's been a lot of guys come in here brokenhearted, and this pod has lifted them up," agreed prisoner Johnny Luna, 31, of Fort Worth.

God pod inmates were separated from other prisoners and received regular Christian training.

"We may have to make the whole jail a God pod," vowed Michael Terry, 35, of Colleyville. "You can't take our joy away."

After listening to prisoners speak, Grisham reassured the group.

"We're here to keep all of you together in spirit," Grisham said to applause from prisoners.

"I think a lot of it was a misconception," Grisham said later. "It came out to them that 'the God pod is no more' and that religious education would not be available. But we will make it voluntary. We don't put them in a pod and teach them. We ask them what they want. We will not force-feed to any inmate of any faith."

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OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

■ EDITORIALS

The 'God Pod'

Inmates' religious education must be provided with an eye on the Constitution.

The Texas Supreme Court made plain this week what should already have been obvious: The Christian education unit that David Williams ran at the Tarrant County Jail while he was sheriff amounted to a government endorsement of a particular religion and thus violated the Constitution.

In its ruling, the court did not say that inmates have no right to religious counseling. Clearly, they do — so long as it doesn't interfere with officials' ability to run a jail.

The court even said that voluntary religious education behind bars may be operated in a manner that respects the figurative boundary between church and state.

But Williams' program, though it may have been started with good intentions aimed at rehabilitation, crossed the line by becoming a vehicle for promoting only the conservative Christian views of Williams and chaplain Hugh

Atwell, both county employees at the time.

The ruling comes somewhat late in the day, given that voters wisely turned Williams out of office last year for budgetary shenanigans and general unresponsiveness to the public that he was supposed to serve.

Still, the decision provides clarity for other officials seeking ways to address inmates' spiritual needs or to experiment with faith-based behavior modification techniques.

"Providing moral guidance to inmates is certainly an important mission, and we recognize that hiring a chaplain may be necessary to secure prisoners' rights ...," Justice Deborah Hankinson wrote for a unanimous court. "But the County cannot ... convey a message that endorses the personal religious beliefs of county officials in attempting to rehabilitate criminal offenders. Such an endorsement of religion is, by any test of which we are aware, unconstitutional."

Fort Worth man collapses at Tarrant County Jail

FORT WORTH — A 26-year-old Fort Worth man was in critical condition Monday night at John Peter Smith Hospital after he collapsed at the Tarrant County Jail, authorities said.

Officials said Drayon Williams was being bailed out of jail just after midnight Saturday when he went into convulsions.

Sheriff's deputies administered first aid until an ambulance arrived, Sheriff Dee Anderson said Monday.

"There was no apparent injury or anything to cause him to go unconscious," Anderson said.

Williams was booked into jail just after 8 p.m. Saturday after he was arrested on suspicion of evading arrest and detention.

According to a police report, an officer attempted to stop a vehicle in the 1000 block of Tierney Road late Saturday afternoon after noticing that it did not have a front license plate.

The vehicle did not stop, and the officer chased it until the driver stopped on Avenue H, according to the police report.

Williams told officers he was not trying to run, "but just trying to get home," the report said. He was arrested.

Several hours later, as Williams' family members were at the jail to post his bail, he collapsed, Anderson said.

2B Wednesday, July 4, 2001

Fort Worth area

Hospitalized man's relatives believe police are responsible

FORT WORTH — Relatives of a 26-year-old Fort Worth man who is in critical condition at John Peter Smith Hospital believe that police officers are responsible for his condition, the man's aunt said Tuesday.

Drayon Williams has been hospitalized since early Sunday after he went into convulsions as he was about to be released from Tarrant County Jail.

Williams was booked into jail just after 8 p.m. Saturday after he was arrested by Fort Worth police on suspicion of evading arrest and detention. About four hours later, his family was preparing to post his bail when he collapsed.

Sheriff's deputies administered first aid until an ambulance arrived, Sheriff Dee Anderson has said. "There was no apparent injury or anything to cause him to go unconscious," Anderson said.

Tuesday, Williams' aunt disputed that. "He was beat up bad," Cherry Lynch said. "He has a knot in the middle of his head, and a billy club wound in the back of his neck."

Lynch said Williams is in a coma, his kidneys have failed and he is on a respirator.

Lt Duane Paul, Fort Worth police spokesman, said he was unaware of the family's accusation.

"Whenever we make an arrest and take a person to jail, if that person has any type of injury, they're immediately seen by a jail nurse," he said. If they have injuries, they must be taken to the hospital, he said.

Inmates' mental services limited

Report says access to treatment is poor

BY TONI HEINZL
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Thousands of mentally ill people on probation or in jail in Tarrant County have little access to treatment, according to a report released Friday.

Any given day, about a sixth of the county's jail population — usually more than 3,000 — is mentally ill. Those with severe mental illness have to wait up to two weeks to see a psychiatrist in nonemergency situations, the report says.

For the less severely ill, it can take up to 10 weeks to get an evaluation and treatment. Thirty-five percent of inmates placed on a psychiatric waiting list leave jail before they can be seen.

The first-of-its-kind report was sponsored by the Mental Health Association of Tarrant County and the Justice Coalition on Offenders With Mental Impairments.

It underscores the need for more money from the Legislature to increase mental health services in the community and the criminal justice system, said state Sen. Mike Moncrief, D-Fort Worth, who has championed measures to expand community-based treatment services.

"People with mental illness do not fare well in our jails," Moncrief said. "When their illness is not treated, they are not

going to fare better when they get out. And lack of treatment is a cause for repeat offenses among this special needs population."

• As many as 60 percent of offenders with mental illness or mental retardation who are on probation or parole break the law again and are rearrested, the report says.

The ripple effect of untreated mental illness reaches beyond the mentally ill offender's immediate family, Moncrief said.

Better treatment services could help prevent tragedies like the Sept.

15, 1999, shooting rampage at Wedgwood Baptist Church, in which seven people were killed and seven were injured, Moncrief said.

The gunman, Larry Ashbrook, 47, who also killed himself that night, had a history of untreated mental illness of which relatives were aware, Moncrief said.

After the shootings, city officials and area lawmakers began seeking more resources for mental health services and for more awareness of mental illness in the community.

Mayor Kenneth Barr and a delegation of mental health providers visited with Bush administration officials and lawmakers last week to lobby for funding for the Mental Health Connection, a Tarrant County initiative launched after the Wedgwood shootings.

Friday's report was the culmination of two years of work, which included a series of community forums with mental health providers.

"This was a milestone for us," said Lauralee Harris, executive director of the Mental Health Association of Tarrant County.

Harris praised Tarrant County law enforcement agencies for sending officers to training classes to help prepare them for encounters with mentally ill people. Most law enforcement agencies in the county have sent their officers to a basic four-hour class, Harris said. A smaller group of officers was certified as mental health resource officers after taking a 24-hour course.

The Arlington Police Department leads all law enforcement agencies in the county with 49 certified mental health resource officers, according to the report.

Texas ranks 43rd in the nation in per-capita spending on mental health services, a position that should shame Texas lawmakers and prompt them to appropriate more money, Moncrief said.

Almost one-third of the 24,100 people on probation annually in Tarrant County have a history of mental illness. The average caseload of specialized probation officers is 56 mentally ill offenders, too many per officer to give them the attention they need, the report says.

Moncrief said he is particularly concerned about mental health services for children: In 1999, nearly

8,000 children ages 10 to 16 were arrested in Tarrant County. There are no data on how many of them were mentally ill.

JULY 25, 2001

Fort Worth area

Inmate's death is ruled cocaine overdose

FORT WORTH — A cocaine overdose caused the death of an inmate who collapsed in the Tarrant County Jail, the county medical examiner ruled Tuesday.

Drayon L. Williams, 26, of Fort Worth went into convulsions June 30 while family members were arranging for bail. He had been arrested several hours earlier on suspicion of evading arrest and detention.

Williams was taken to John Peter Smith Hospital, where he was placed on life support until his family removed it July 6.

Williams' relatives have said that they believe that police officers beat him up and were responsible for his condition.

The medical examiner, however, ruled that his death was accidental.

Williams' aunt, Cherry Lynch, said Tuesday night that she doesn't consider her nephew's death an accident.

"If the police hadn't been running him like they did, he wouldn't have put that stuff in his mouth and swallowed it," she said. "If they had taken him straight to the hospital, he wouldn't have died. It wasn't an accident to me."

LETTERS, FAXES AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR

July 30, 2001

Mixed bag

If the Bush administration succeeds in granting legal residency to Mexicans living illegally in the United States who want to work legally, we will be better off. If George W. Bush works things out with Russia to reduce the quantity of weapons of mass destruction, we will be much safer.

But pushing "Star Wars" is wasting billions of tax dollars on a stupid program. Any nation wanting to harm us will use terrorist methods, not missiles.

Even if Bush does some good during his term, his harms are far greater, and much damage was done to us by his running for president. Many of the best-qualified local candidates lost because Bush was head of a ticket; people like having a governor of their state as president, and it's easier to vote a straight party ticket.

The current good sheriff is better than the former strange sheriff, but we have never known a better-trained, more fully experienced, highly recommended law enforcement officer than Luther Perry.

Democrats are duty-bound to work for the good of the whole society, and if they aren't doing that, don't vote.

Abigail Brown
Edgecliff Village

Cuts in pretrial release proposed

The program allows people accused of minor crimes to avoid spending a night in jail.

By **MAX B. BAKER**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Every year up to 5,000 first-time offenders and poor criminal defendants avoid spending a night in the Tarrant County Jail through a unique program that gives them a get-out-of-jail-for-almost-free card.

Accused of crimes such as shoplifting, writing bad checks and other nonviolent crimes, defendants in the county's pretrial release program pay a tiny portion of what they would have to pay a bail bondsman.

Judges, attorneys and county officials praise the program, saying it provides a quick way for some defendants to stay out of jail on charges that are, in about half of the cases, not filed or are ultimately dismissed.

But in an effort to make up for a possible budget shortfall of up to \$1 million, Tarrant County Commissioner Glen Whitley wants to slash the pretrial release program by dramatically reducing its staffing and hours of operation.

"I would like to see it curtailed," Whitley said. "It's all a matter of what's the county's budget and trying to balance it without a tax increase."

Whitley suggests taking 11 of the 17 employees who work in pretrial release and transferring them to other jobs. He also wants the service to be offered only during weekday business hours.

To determine what effect it might have on the courts, Whitley suggests working with a

scaled-back program for up to 60 days. He said Dallas County runs its program with three people, five days a week.

County Administrator G.K. Maenius supports the \$872,000 pretrial release program, saying that besides offering a humane way to handle some people accused of minor crimes, it saves the county millions of dollars.

"If we didn't have it, it would be a tremendous cost to the county because those individuals would sit in jail," Maenius said. The county pays a high initial cost to process people entering the jail and up to \$50 a day to care for them.

Maenius said Whitley's proposal also would jeopardize a \$250,000 state grant, especially if monitoring of defendants is dramatically curtailed.

Defense lawyers were split

cent or 20 percent fees that bail bond firms charge.

Tarrant County district judges bar pretrial release for a long list of crimes, but exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis. Eighty-five percent of the crimes involved are misdemeanors, and the defendants usually are nonviolent.

The average amount of the bonds paid under the program was about \$40, said Michelle Brown, program coordinator, but the court can charge as little as \$20.

Although the program was originally designed to help poor criminal defendants get out of jail, Maenius said court rulings have opened up the program. Now, about 40 percent of the defendants are indigent, he said.

To defray the cost of the \$872,000 program, the county collects about \$135,000 a year in fees, Maenius said. Subtract the \$250,000 state grant from their costs, he said, and the county pumps in \$487,000 from its general fund.

"No pretrial program in the

when told about Whitley's ideas. Attorney Francisco Hernandez Jr. said the commissioner's cutbacks "would be horrible," trapping people needlessly in the criminal justice system.

"It provides a cheap and convenient way to get out," Hernandez said. Instead of cutting back, the program should be expanded, he said. "Poor people can get out if they are charged with a first-time, misdemeanor offense."

Attorney Bill Ray, who handles a large number of indigent criminal cases, disagreed.

Ray echoed what bail bondsmen have been saying for years: Pretrial release takes the cases in which there is the least risk that the defendant won't appear in court, leaving bondsmen with higher-risk cases.

"They need to disband it. They ought not have it," Ray said.

Pretrial release programs like the ones in Fort Worth, Austin and Dallas were created nearly three decades ago for people who could not afford the 15 per-

cent breaks even," Maenius said.

C.E. Watson, president of the Professional Bail Bondsmen of Tarrant County, said pretrial release "takes money out of the taxpayers' pocket." Whitley has met with bail bondsmen, but Watson wouldn't comment on the proposal.

County Criminal Court Judge Daryl Coffey said it doesn't take a master criminal to figure out why Whitley and other county officials want pretrial release shut down: Bail bondsmen are big contributors to their campaigns.

Rather than cut back on pretrial release, the county should expand it, Coffey said. Although about 3,300 bonds were written by the service in the last fiscal year, the courts disposed of 27,863 misdemeanor cases in 2000.

"We need to enlarge the capacity of the program," Coffey said. "That deal [proposed by Whitley] is led by pro-bondsmen people."

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Jailed writer awaits decision by federal court of appeals

Woman refusing to give notes on slaying to grand jury

BY JUAN A. LOZANO
The Associated Press

HOUSTON — A writer who has spent more than a week in jail for refusing to turn over her research notes for a book about a society slaying could spend several more weeks behind bars awaiting a federal appeals court decision in her case, her attorney said Monday.

Vanessa Leggett, 33, was found in contempt of court by a U.S. district judge on July 20 and ordered jailed without bail for refusing to turn over her notes to a federal grand jury investigating the 1997 slaying of 46-year-old Doris Angleton, wife of millionaire former bookie Robert Angleton.

Leggett's attorney, Mike DeGeurin, filed an emergency motion for bail and a motion to delay the lower court's ruling until after a hearing before the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. The motions were denied.

But the court did grant DeGeurin's motion for an expedited appeal. DeGeurin said he expects a decision within the next month. Leggett could be held in jail for up to 18 months if the lower court's ruling isn't overturned.

Meanwhile, a national organization for journalists based in Arlington, Va. — The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press — petitioned the appeals court on Leggett's behalf Monday, arguing that

"In most parts of the country, courts have recognized a reporter's privilege [to protect confidential sources] either through a shield law or constitutional protection. In Texas, this privilege has not been recognized like in other parts of the country."

— Lucy Dalglish
Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

such government actions threaten the independence of a free press, which is guaranteed in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

"A lot of [Leggett's] information is coming from people who agreed to talk to her as long as their names weren't mentioned," DeGeurin said. "The government is annexing the news media as investigative agents of the government by this process. Ms. Leggett believes this distracts from an independent press."

The U.S. Department of Justice declined to comment on the case because it is still being investigated, said agency spokeswoman Norma Lacy.

DeGeurin said authorities conducted the hearing at

which Leggett was ordered jailed in secret. He said he believes that the federal government might not think of his client as a true journalist because she doesn't have an employer. He says Leggett's work previously has been published in magazines.

"It's clear she was involved in investigating a news story," said Lucy Dalglish, executive director of The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. "Leggett has a privilege [of not] identifying this information."

"The issue is pretty simple: assure independence so [the news media] is not viewed as another arm of the government. We find the Justice Department's attitude toward this case to be rather puzzling."

The last time the Justice Department had a journalist jailed was in 1991, Dalglish said.

"In most parts of the country, courts have recognized a reporter's privilege [to protect confidential sources] either through a shield law or constitutional protection," she said. "In Texas, this privilege has not been recognized like in other parts of the country."

The federal investigation into the slaying came after a state court jury acquitted Robert Angleton of murder in a 1998 trial.

Doris Angleton was found shot to death in her River Oaks home April 16, 1997.

Robert Angleton and his brother, Roger, were charged with capital murder. State prosecutors alleged that Robert Angleton hired his brother to kill his wife to prevent her from getting millions of dollars in a divorce settlement.

Roger Angleton committed suicide in the Harris County Jail in February 1998, before his trial. But he left behind notes confessing to shooting his sister-in-law. Roger Angleton wrote that he planned the slaying and framed his brother to extort money from him.

Leggett interviewed Roger Angleton while he was in the county jail.



GO ONLINE FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Reporters Committee:
<http://www.rcfp.org>

TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2001

■ EDITORIALS

Pretrial release is worth saving

A Tarrant County program has served suspects and taxpayers well.

A representative of the Professional Bail Bondsmen of Tarrant County thinks that allowing first-time, nonviolent, misdemeanor offenders to pay a fraction of their bail to avoid incarceration while awaiting a court date "takes money out of the taxpayer's pocket."

But association President C.E. Watson didn't add the obvious to that sentence: The pretrial release program also takes money out of *his* pocket, and it leaves the bondsmen on the hook for the defendants who are more dangerous — and more likely to skip trial.

Bondsmen, as a rule, charge anywhere from 15 to 20 percent of the bond amount to bail people out of jail. The pretrial release program generally charges \$20 or 3 percent of the bond, whichever is greater. This means that first-time offenders accused of nonviolent misdemeanor offenses can avoid an overnight — or longer — jail stay if they qualify for pretrial release.

Without actively looking for one, the bondsmen may have found a friend in County Com-

missioner Glen Whitley, who's always one to watch the taxpayers' pennies. That is a laudable trait in an elected official. But Whitley's proposal to scale back the county's decades-old pretrial release program may be penny-wise but dollar-foolish.

Whitley proposes to move 11 of the 17 county employees who work the pretrial release program to other jobs, and then offer the program only during weekday business hours. The commissioners are scheduled to be briefed on Whitley's plan during today's court session.

Commissioners also will hear how much it costs the county to process someone into the jail, and that it takes \$50 a day to care for each inmate. Many indigent individuals who can come up with the pretrial release money can't begin to raise what's needed for a bondsman, so they sit in jail.

There are practical reasons why pretrial release makes sense. People sitting in jail lose their jobs and can't take care of their families. That puts an even greater strain on the public dollar.

Commissioners may need to cut \$1 million from next year's budget, but this isn't the place to do it.

Case dismissed against man who got 99-year term

Prosecutors drop the drug charges because a jailer testified that he lied in a report about the defendant.

BY GABRIELLE CRIST
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Two months after jurors sentenced a man to 99 years in prison on drug charges, prosecutors have dismissed the case because it was based on the testimony of a Tarrant County jailer who admitted in trial that he

had lied about the incident.

Norman Dean Smith, 43, remains in custody at the Tarrant County Jail because he is accused of violating his parole. He has prior convictions for charges including aggravated robbery, indecency with a child and possession of a forged check.

Dismissing charges once a jury has returned a verdict is highly unusual, attorneys said.

"I certainly think it's rare, but it's not unprecedented," said Rob Kepple, general counsel for the Texas District and County Attorneys Association. "It certainly can happen."

Prosecutors filed one count of possession of a controlled substance against Smith in September 2000, after he was arrested on a warrant accusing him of violating his parole.

Jailer Jeffrey Patri wrote in an offense report that while he was

(More on CASE on Page 13A)

searching Smith, he "observed an object fall from Norman Smith's right hand when he was removing his belt. I observed Norman Smith cover the object with his right foot."

But during Smith's March trial, Patri's story changed.

He testified that he heard something fall to the floor, but didn't see where it came from. He also said that there were other inmates in the room. His written reports had not mentioned that.

During cross-examination by defense attorney Bill Ray, Patri, who has worked as a jailer since 1992, admitted that he lied in the report, according to an uncertified copy of the trial transcript.

"If you see a person commit a crime, then you have a duty

to report that, correct?" Ray asked Patri.

"Yes, sir."

"And you have a duty to truthfully report that, right?" Ray asked.

"Yes."

"But you've just told us that you did not truthfully report it, isn't that right?" Ray asked.

"Right," Patri said.

Ray asked state District Judge Sharen Wilson for a mistrial.

He argued that prosecutors Kelly Loftus and Suzannah Touzel knew before the trial that Patri had lied in his report and did not tell him. Under the law, prosecutors must disclose any evidence that could exonerate the defendant.

Wilson denied the request for a mistrial.

Loftus could have dismissed the case at that point, but because the jury had heard the discrepancies, she opted to proceed. The jury could decide if Patri was credible,

she said.

"It was a personal decision on my part," Loftus said.

Touzel said she believed that the drugs were Smith's, but could not support a conviction based on Patri's unreliable testimony. However, she was not the lead prosecutor and unless Loftus agreed, she couldn't dismiss the case or reach a plea agreement. She

said she alerted her supervisor, Christy Jack, who is also a judicial candidate for Criminal District Court No. 3.

Jack agreed with Loftus, Touzel said.

Jack did not return repeated phone calls.

Typically, the drug charge Smith faced carried a maxi-

mum two-year sentence, but because Smith had so many prior convictions, he faced up to life in prison.

The jury found Smith guilty of drug possession and sentenced him to 99 years in prison.

Touzel said this week she was shocked by the verdict and was concerned that it sent the message that shoddy police work is acceptable.

"I'm not comfortable with someone getting 99 years on slop, complete slop," Touzel said.

After an internal affairs investigation, Patri was dismissed, said Mike Johnston, the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department's executive chief

deputy.

"The actual charge was falsifying an incident report," Johnston said.

Efforts to locate Patri to comment were unsuccessful. His phone number is unlisted, and he did not respond to two letters, one mailed and one left at his apartment Tuesday.

Ray appealed the trial verdict, and while that was pending, he met with Tarrant County District Attorney Tim Curry. He showed Curry a transcript of Patri's testimony.

Curry initially said he believed that prosecutors knew that Patri's story had changed and failed to tell the defense. He instructed Loftus' supervisors to file a motion for a new trial, which would allow them to then dismiss the charges.

However, before that mandate was issued, Loftus said, she had already decided to dismiss the case because she did not want to support untruthful

"I'm not comfortable with someone getting 99 years on slop, complete slop."

— Suzannah Touzel
prosecutor

testimony. She did, however, support the jury's verdict, she said.

But Tuesday, Curry said that he does not believe prosecutors acted improperly.

"I was misinformed, by who I do not know," Curry said, adding that he still supports the dismissal. "Any way you look at it," Patri's testimony was a problem, Curry said.

Ray said Tuesday that he was upset with Curry's seemingly sudden change of perspective. He said he is convinced that the prosecutors knew Patri lied in his report before the trial and failed to tell him about it. Curry agreed with him as recently as Monday, Ray said.

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Jail-bypass program for minor offenders escapes budget cuts

By **KAREN BROOKS**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — A program that allows some first-time and misdemeanor offenders to avoid spending a night in jail was saved from the chopping block Tuesday after an uproar from judges and police officers throughout Tarrant County.

County commissioners directed the program's staff to spend the next 60 days studying the effect of budget-cutting measures such as scaling back the hours of the program and cutting staff.

They were also told to come up with recommendations on how they could cut their budget.

"It may be that there are none," Commissioner Glen Whitley said.

Whitley asked that the staff study the question after he met with strong resistance Tuesday to his proposal to cut back on the \$487,000 program, an effort to offset a projected budget shortfall of around \$1 million.

His idea was to cut the program from 16 hours a day Monday through Saturday to eight hours a day Monday through Friday.

But in Tuesday's Commissioners Court meeting, judges and police officers from across Tarrant County voiced their support for the program as is.

Even Whitley's idea to see it done for a limited time as a pilot program was shot down.

"I just wanted to cut back the hours a little bit and see if it had a negative impact," he said. "But I'm not hearing any support."

Officers from smaller police departments in Hurst and Richland Hills said the program allows them to save on the personnel costs of having to guard someone who is

picked up for a minor offense such as unpaid traffic tickets or bouncing checks.

"It helps our agency keep from housing someone overnight," said Hurst police Lt. Steve Moore.

The county pays a high initial cost to process people entering the jail and up to \$50 a day to care for them, officials say.

Pretrial release programs like the ones in Fort Worth, Austin and Dallas were created nearly three decades ago for people who could not afford the 15 percent or 20 percent fees that bail bond firms charge.

In Tarrant County, the program annually helps up to 5,000 people get out of jail within a few hours. They pay an average of \$40, and sometimes as little as \$20, compared with the several hundred dollars it would take to bring in a bail bondsman.

Eighty-five percent of the crimes are misdemeanors, and the defendants usually are nonviolent. About 40 percent of the defendants are indigent, officials said.

Commissioners Dionne Bagsby and J.D. Johnson said that every few years, the program is targeted for cuts — and every few years, officials decide it's the most cost-efficient program in the state.

"This is not new ground," Bagsby said. "There may well be some changes that may be made, but I don't think we need to direct that from this bench."

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 2001

Sheriff, court have 'lovesfest'

BY JACK DOUGLAS JR.
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

FORT WORTH — Unlike contentious meetings of the past, Tarrant County commissioners and some of the top commanders of the Sheriff's Department gathered Wednesday and gushed over how wonderful everything is.

One official described it as a "lovesfest" when Sheriff Dee Anderson explained his new departmental organizational chart to the commissioners and County Judge Tom Vandergriff.

"It was very pleasant," added county Budget Director Debbie Schneider, who was there.

Anderson said members of the Commissioners Court gave their overwhelming approval to his plan to create a patrol division in the southern part of the county, centralize record-keeping, upgrade computer technology and revamp county jail operations in downtown Fort Worth.

"There is a spirit of cooperation now," Anderson said, referring to his relationship with the governing Commissioners Court and how different it is from that of former Sheriff David Williams, who lost his bid for a third term in last year's elections.

When Williams first took office in 1992, members of the Commissioners Court were very supportive of his ideas, including beefing up the jail's now-abolished "God Pod" and creating a helicopter division.

But his relationship with the commissioners began to sour after two deputies were killed in a helicopter crash, and after he began to fight with them over more employees, more vehicles, a bigger budget and control over hundreds of thousands of dollars in jail commissary funds.

Pct. 4 Commissioner J.D. Johnson says he does not miss the confrontations. "We're lovers; we don't like to fight," Johnson said of the court.

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Jailer faces charges of indecency with child

BY MELODY McDONALD
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

A Tarrant County jailer, who was arrested this week and suspended from his job, faces charges of indecency with a 6-year-old child, authorities said.

Michael Nicholas Depalo II, 32, turned himself in to Azle police about 1 p.m. Wednesday after learning that a warrant had been issued for his arrest, Azle police Lt. Greg Arrington said Thursday.

Depalo was released from jail on \$15,000 bail, Arrington said.

The child's mother contacted authorities several weeks ago after learning that Depalo might have inappropriately touched her daughter, Arrington said.

The child was later interviewed by investigators in the Crimes Against Children Unit

of the Tarrant County district attorney's office and Child Protective Services.

"The child was consistent," Arrington said. "Not only did she let her mother know what had happened, but when interviewed by authorities, she told them the same thing."

Arrington said Depalo "was not a stranger" to the child's mother, but he did not know the extent of their acquaintance.

After Depalo was taken into custody, Azle police contacted the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department, where he has been a jailer for four years, Chief Deputy Jim Willett said.

Depalo was immediately suspended with pay pending the outcome of the case, Willett said.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2001

Deputy runs over, kills Reno man

He was lying in the road after having been thrown out of a bar

By **MELODY McDONALD**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

A customer who had been thrown out of a northwest Tarrant County bar was killed Sunday night when a sheriff's deputy answering a 911 call from the bar ran over him, authorities said.

Daniel Leo Hodges, 41, of Reno was lying in the center turn lane of Farm Road 730, also known as Boyd Road, near the Rockn Kountry bar just before midnight when Deputy Mark Ortega drove over him, Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson said Tuesday.

Hodges was pronounced dead at the scene.

Ortega, who has worked for the Sheriff's Department since 1991, was placed on routine paid administrative leave until an investigation is completed,

Anderson said.

Deputies were sent to the bar, at 11285 Farm Road 730 in unincorporated Tarrant County near Azle, about 11:40 p.m. after a 911 call reported a disturbance, Anderson said.

Witnesses told investigators that Hodges, his wife and brother had arrived at the bar about 1½ hours earlier and that Hodges had been drinking heavily.

"There were several reports of him being belligerent and starting fights," Anderson said. "A female bartender told him she couldn't serve him anymore, and he became outraged."

According to witnesses, Hodges knocked the bartender to the ground, Anderson said.

After bar patrons physically put Hodges out of the bar, he banged his head on the outside

wall and threw himself on the ground, Anderson said. Several times, he tried to go back inside, but patrons stopped him, he said.

Then, after the 911 call had been placed, Hodges disappeared.

"Everyone loses sight of him," Anderson said. "No one knew where he was."

Ortega, who was driving north on Farm Road 730, ran over Hodges as he began to turn left into the bar's dark parking lot, Anderson said.

"We don't know why he was lying in the roadway," Anderson said.

A woman who answered the phone at Rockn Kountry declined to comment Tuesday evening.

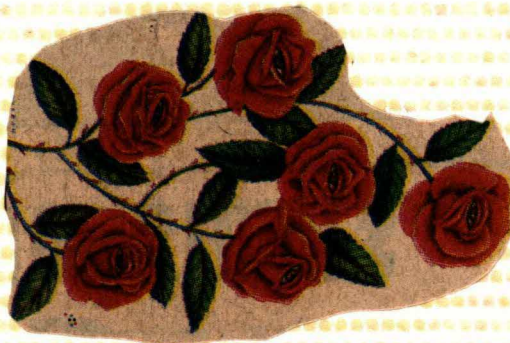
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OPINIONS

Star-Telegram

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2001

■ LETTERS, FAXES AND E-MAILS TO THE EDITOR



A great actress

Accolades for Miki Turner's Monday article and the ABC documentary *Beyond Tara*, as both unveiled the true identity of the great actress Hattie McDaniel.

McDaniel took the words from Margaret Mitchell's great classic, *Gone With The Wind*, and turned them into the epitome of character definition in her performance as Mammy.

Like so many black actors, somewhat stereotyped by the roles offered, she took each one as a challenge. And in so doing she became not only an acknowledged credit to her race but established herself as a trailblazer throughout the annals of the motion picture industry. Each accomplishment, even as a maid, endeared her to the hearts of millions, for she was family.

I envision Hattie McDaniel standing triumphantly in heaven, firmly grasping her golden Oscar in one hand while holding a tray in the other — equally pleased to be serving, even as a mammy, before the throne of God.

Floyd F. Clark
Fort Worth

Texas peace officers' badge clock running out

By J.R. LABBE
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

Dee Anderson won't say that he was surprised at the number of Tarrant County Sheriff's Department employees who are not up to date on their state-mandated training.

But one can hear the weariness in the sheriff's voice when, once again, he finds himself cleaning up his predecessor's mess.

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) requires that all certified peace officers in the state complete legislatively mandated continuing education every two years to keep their licenses current.

For most law enforcement agencies, the most efficient and effective way of getting all the officers

CRIMINAL JUSTICE On Sept. 1, law enforcement personnel who haven't completed state-mandated training aren't legally cops anymore.

through the 40 hours of courses is to spread the pain — take advantage of the 24 months allotted to rotate officers through the 20 hours of legislatively required courses on family violence, child abuse, sexual assault, sex offender characteristics and cultural diversity, plus the 20 hours of additional topics that each department wants to focus on.

"The challenge we are facing right now shouldn't have been surprising, but under the previous administration there was not a huge emphasis on getting people

More on CRIMINAL JUSTICE on 5E

Sunday, August 26, 2001

through their training," Anderson said in a telephone interview. "We are faced with trying to get a large percentage of our peace officers that haven't had 40 hours of training through by Sept. 1."

Chief Deputy Jim Willett, whose job it is to see that the 524 commissioned peace officers in the Sheriff's Department are legit to wear badges and guns on Saturday, said the push to get everyone through class is putting a strain on everyone.

"The attitude before Sheriff Anderson got here was, 'Don't worry, we'll figure out a way around it later,'" Willett said. "Welcome to later. It's an adventure every day, with new land mines all the time. This was the latest."

Why is the Sept. 1 date so important? Because according to the commission that issues law enforcement credentials for the state, all the licenses are set to expire that day unless the officers have completed their continuing education for the 1999-2001 training cycle.

"A person with an expired peace officer or jailer license is not authorized to perform the duties of a peace officer or jailer, nor present themselves as a peace officer or jailer by wearing a uniform," warns the TCLEOSE Web site. "A department who keeps such a person in employment is subject to **civil liability** lawsuits for their action. A chief administrator who continues the appointment of an unlicensed person is subject to **criminal penalties** under Section 1701.551 Occupations Code."

(Don't gripe at me about the grammar; that's a direct quote from the Web page.)

It doesn't take a liability lawyer to figure out what a nightmare it would be for a city or a county to have officers with expired licenses hitting the streets on Saturday.

According to Kris Faldyn, TCLEOSE's public information officer, the commission initially mailed about 22,000 letters the third week of June, advising law enforcement personnel across the state that their training records indicated they were in jeopardy of not meeting the deadline. Texas has more than 75,000 law enforcement and corrections personnel in more than 2,700 agencies and institutions.

Ironically, TCLEOSE busted one of its own deadlines. According to commission policy, the notices were supposed to go out 90 days prior to the drop-dead date, which would have put the postmark at June 3.

Before readers start hyperventilating over the thought that almost a third of the state's law enforcement personnel are walking, riding or driving around without their state-mandated training, know that TCLEOSE's records aren't a real-time reflection of what's happening on the department level. Once an officer completes the training, the home agency has 30 days to send the records to the commission. So hundreds, possibly thousands, of officers who completed their training in June would have showed up as deficient when TCLEOSE ran its report for the first warning letter.

Faldyn said that when her agency ran the report less than a month later, the number of

officers in jeopardy of license revocation, dropped to 16,000.

Additionally, there's some question as to how accurate TCLEOSE's record-keeping is for the information it does have. When Ann Diamond, chief of civil litigation at the Tarrant County district attorney's office, was asked about the potential liability for a city should an officer report for duty without a valid license, she said she had talked with officers around the courthouse who had received the June letter and were baffled by what they read.

"Several of them have completed the necessary hours, so they were surprised by the letter," Diamond said. "Even more confusing, letters came with attachments showing the training records, and the records indicated the officers had sufficient hours to be recertified."

Anderson doesn't need TCLEOSE to tell him he has a problem, and not one of his own making. The Tarrant County Sheriff's Department employs literally hundreds of peace officers whose job descriptions only call for them to have a jailer's license. Apparently, former Sheriff David Williams never turned down an employee's request to seek a peace officer's license.

"I had heard this was happening in the department but had no idea how widespread it was until I got in here," Anderson said. "There was no selection criteria. If you were a jailer and wanted to go off and get a license, the Sheriff's Department would sponsor you at the academy. Come back, turn in the license, and boom — you're a peace officer."

Anderson said he doesn't want to penalize those employees who received certification on their own — many of them did it to be eligible for part-time jobs or promotion, since Williams considered only peace officers to be upwardly mobile — but it has created a problem in finding the time to release them from their jobs to get the 40 hours of continuing education to keep the certification current.

"There are 354 peace officers in confinement alone, yet the job requirements only call for 54 peace officers," Anderson said. "We are carrying 300 licenses that our organization doesn't require. I am mandated to train all of them as peace officers if they are not going to lose that certification. We've got to get all of them plus those performing peace officer functions — patrol, warrant division — through training.

"We're spending a tremendous amount of money training people as peace officers who don't need to be."

Fortunately for Tarrant County taxpayers, there is a new sheriff in town, and he's put a stop to the practice of allowing anyone who wants one to go get a peace officer's license. Unfortunately for Anderson, he's paying the price for the sins of administrations past.

"As with so many other things," he said, "what happened here was a disservice to employees and a disservice to taxpayers."

Jill "J.R." Labbe is a *Star-Telegram* senior editorial writer.
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2 jail commanders fired by sheriff

Saturday, September 15, 2001 ★

By **BOB MAHLBURG**
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

Two top commanders at the Tarrant County Jail have been fired as part of Sheriff Dee Anderson's ongoing department restructuring.

James Moore and Savala Swanson, both appointed by former Sheriff David Williams, were fired Wednesday after refusing to accept demotions, Anderson said.

"We went in with the attitude that everyone here would be given a chance

COUNTY Two supervisors appointed by former Sheriff David Williams are sacked as part of Sheriff Dee Anderson's departmental shake-up.

to prove themselves," Anderson said Friday. "It just wasn't working out with those two people."

Anderson said the firings did not stem from any particular incident but from performance in a number of areas, including personnel management, inad-

equated preparations for a recent jail inspection that the county passed, jail operations and other areas.

"It wasn't any single thing," he said. "It was a long-term evaluation. They're exempt employees, and they serve at the pleasure of the sheriff."

The firings are not the first Sheriff's Department shake-ups since Anderson replaced Williams in January.

Anderson demoted several other officials shortly after taking office and has revamped the department after

years of highly publicized struggles over the former sheriff's use of helicopters, police dogs and staff.

Anderson demoted the chief deputy over administration, Larry Hester, who is now a lieutenant in the patrol division; administrative Capt. John Dalton, now a lieutenant in judicial services; and criminal investigations Capt. David Barrington, who resigned.

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Harry H. Ballard



WEATHERFORD — Harry H. "Pete" Ballard, 57, a sergeant with the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department, died Saturday, Sept. 15, 2001, at his residence after an apparent heart attack.

Funeral: 1 p.m. Wednesday at Biggers Funeral Chapel. Burial: Jaybird Cemetery. Visitation: 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at Biggers Funeral Home.

Harry H. "Pete" Ballard was born May 9, 1944, in Madison, W.Va. Pete served in the U.S. Army from 1962 to 1970. Since he was the only surviv-

ing son, he wrote to the governor of West Virginia requesting to be allowed to go to Vietnam where he served two tours of duty. He had been employed with the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department for the past 16 years and currently was a sergeant at the corrections center facility.

Survivors: His bride of 17 years as he affectionately called her, Janice Ballard of Weatherford; daughters, Bethany Ballard and Shannon Ballard of Cross Lanes, W.Va., Amy Mulliken and husband, Jim, of Weatherford, Jana Gibson and Julie McCuller, both of Fort Worth; sisters, Doris Pauley of Weatherford, Jo King of Tullahoma, Tenn., Glenna Nichols of Brookpark, Ohio; father and mother-in-law, Glen and Jammie Hardee of Fort Worth; brother-in-law Glen Eugene Hardee of Fort Worth; grandchildren, Justin McCuller, Austin Rogholt, Sean Gibson, Sam Mullikin; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Biggers Funeral Home
7139 Jacksboro Hwy., (817) 237-3341

TARRANT COUNTY | FORT WORTH

Sheriff's official arrested after gun fired in Dallas

By NEIL STRASSMAN
and BILL MILLER
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITERS

FORT WORTH — The Tarrant County sheriff's executive administrator was arrested in Dallas early Friday and booked into jail for discharging a firearm in the city, according to a Dallas police report.



GRISHAM

Police arrested Terry Grisham, 46, of Fort Worth, a 14-year county employee, while investigating a report about gunshots near Lovers Lane and Inwood Road.

Police checking the report said Grisham had been shooting a gun in the parking lot of a business. No one was injured.

"This is very troubling," Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson said. "It will all be investigated internally."

Grisham was released from jail after posting \$500 bail.

Grisham, who is not a licensed peace officer, has a concealed-weapon permit

ARREST A former high school teammate of Sheriff Dee Anderson is released on bail after his arrest outside a Dallas business.

issued by the state, Anderson said. The sheriff said he did not know why Grisham was in Dallas and could not say why he might have been firing a gun.

Grisham did not respond to messages left at his cellular phone number and at work.

Anderson, who has known Grisham since the two played high football together at Eastern Hills High School, said he knew of no other similar incidents in Grisham's background.

Anderson said he spoke to Grisham after his release from jail.

"He's owed several days' vacation, which he will take, and we agreed to talk again next week," Anderson said.

According to Dallas police records, officers responded to a complaint of shots being fired in the 5000 block of Lovers Lane about 2 a.m.

They found Grisham in the parking lot of a business and arrested him on a charge of discharging a firearm in a municipality of more than 100,000 people.

He willingly surrendered to the arresting officers. The police report says he was sober at the time of the incident.

He was booked into the Lew Sterrett Justice Center about 4:40 a.m. and released about five hours later.

Grisham was first hired as an assistant to former County Judge Roy English. He continued in that post under County Judge Tom Vandergriff, reviewing and processing county applications for the sale of alcoholic beverages. He occasionally contacted lawmakers and worked as a legislative liaison, Vandergriff said.

Grisham began to work for the sheriff when Anderson took office in January. He earns a county salary of \$86,868, plus a car allowance, in his job as the sheriff's assistant.

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Wednesday, October 17, 2001

Fort Worth receives jail ultimatum

By NEIL STRASSMAN
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

FORT WORTH — After five years of unsuccessful negotiations over a jail contract, Tarrant County has given Fort Worth an ultimatum: Pay up, or open a city jail.

Unless Fort Worth agrees to a new contract for housing prisoners by Nov. 20, the county will stop taking the

JAIL Tarrant County has given Fort Worth a one-month deadline for resolving a contract dispute over housing prisoners in the county jail.

city's prisoners on Dec. 31, the county said in a letter delivered Monday to Fort Worth Mayor Kenneth Barr.

"We are trying to make sure Fort

Worth is paying for the costs associated with their prisoners, just like very other city in Tarrant County does," County Commissioner Glen Whitley said. "Two-thirds of the county taxpayers should not foot the bill for Fort Worth prisoners."

Fort Worth officials pledged to resolve the issue.

"I think we'll find a way to work through this. It's not easy," Barr said. "There have been many meetings on the cost of operating the jail and how to allocate costs."

County officials say they are losing up to \$3 million a year by housing Fort Worth prisoners. City officials say that they are paying a fair share and have questioned whether the county is ask-

ing the city to subsidize jail operations.

According to jail records, about 56 percent of the 53,559 prisoners booked into the county jail in 2000 were from Fort Worth, many charged with misdemeanors.

Each day, an average of 60 Fort Worth prisoners are booked into the jail, with about

two-thirds of those facing charges on Class C misdemeanors such as outstanding warrants or drunkenness. They typically post bail quickly and remain in jail no more than a day.

But short jail stays are the most expensive, say county officials, because of the hours necessary to take fingerprints, provide showers, issue clothes and inventory property. The county must also bear the costs of bedding, clothing, laundry building maintenance, medica-

and mental health care, and facility maintenance.

Prisoners generally become the county's responsibility after charges are filed against them, usually within two days. Arlington and other Tarrant County cities with their own jails handle the initial processing of prisoners, and then transfer only those charged with more serious crimes to the county jail.

In Dallas, Bexar and Harris counties, those arrested for public intoxication go to city facilities instead of county jails, officials said. Dallas pays a pro-rata share to the county for those arrested for other offenses, officials said.

The 10-year contract between Fort Worth and Tarrant County expired in October 1996. The agreement was part of the terms of construction of

a city police headquarters — with county jail facilities on the upper floors — at 350 W. Belknap St. The city paid \$10.9 million, and the county paid \$6 million for the building.

Under that agreement, Fort Worth paid \$6 for each prisoner processed and \$1 a day for housing. The daily housing fee had risen to \$30 by October 1996, but the processing fee stayed at \$6.

A February 1997 study of Tarrant County jail costs by David M. Griffith Associates of Dallas concluded that the county's costs had increased to \$99 for processing a prisoner in and out of jail and an average of about \$40 a day to house each inmate.

In April 1999, the city and county were moving toward a resolution when then-Sheriff David Williams declined to

cooperate with an efficiency study of the jail to examine staffing requirements, booking delays and release of prisoners.

In an Oct. 5 letter to the county from City Manager Gary Jackson, the city offered to increase its payments for prisoners by 2 percent, from about \$2.23 million to \$2.27 million, about the same percentage increase as the previous year.

Jackson also proposed having a 24-hour-a-day magistrate available to process Fort Worth prisoners to reduce the number in jail.

County officials said the proposal is unacceptable. In the letter this week to Barr, County Judge Tom Vandergriff said to cover the county's costs, the city must pay \$150 for intake, \$29 daily for housing and \$76 for release.

If an agreement cannot be

reached, the county will stop using the cellblocks in the police station building to free up space for a city-run jail, Vandergriff said in the letter.

"At that point, we can discuss resolving any issues separating our operations and any remaining contract issues," Vandergriff wrote.

City Councilman Jim Lane, who has worked closely with the negotiations, said he is confident that an agreement can be reached before the November deadline.

But the city wants to be sure it is paying for prisoners only — not subsidizing jail costs, he said.

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